JUN 23 1948

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

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Vol. XXXV. No. 900. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1948 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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DR. DALTON'S RETURN

THOSE who seek a deep political significance in the return of Dr. Dalton to the Government, are complicating matters unnecessarily. The ex-Chancellor has paid for his indiscretion by banishment for six months from the Cabinet. During this period he has strengthened his hold on the Labour Party and rediscovered his former interest in foreign and imperial affairs. If there is to be an imperial conference this year, he is the natural person to undertake the preparatory work; and it looks as though the Prime Minister desires to have him in reserve—but also "in the know"—for the eventuality of any sudden gap at the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Defence.

Many observers are bound to ask whether Hugh Dalton will strengthen the forces of the Left or of the Right inside the Cabinet. To a large extent, this is an unreal question. As long as full employment is maintained, there will be no social basis in Britain for a Left Wing of the Labour Party. "Left" and "Right" as applied to Socialist leaders have become rather misleading labels which relate less to present problems than to the pre-war behaviour of particular Ministers. Mr. Morrison and Mr. Bevan made the two outstanding speeches at Scarborough on domestic policy, and Dr. Dalton won an ovation for his performance in trouncing the Federal Unionists while accepting their resolution on behalf of the Executive. Judged in terms not of style but of content, their three speeches revealed no difference of policy. As one observer expressed it, "Mr. Morrison is a Right-winger: he tries to look less Socialist than he really is. Mr. Bevan is a Left-winger: he tries to look more Socialist than Mr. Morrison. And Dr. Dalton achieves the unique feat of simultaneously looking more and less Socialist than either."

There is a grain of truth in this observation. All three, together with the rest of the Cabinet, are aware that the old-fashioned dispute about more or less nationalisation is at best a secondary issue and that Britain's survival depends on quite different factors. What divides the Socialist leadership is the question how far the Labour Party should dispense with its traditional habits of thinking and talking in order to meet the new situation and to win back the middle-class vote. In this controversy, Mr. Shinwell, Mr. Bevan and, to a lesser extent, Dr. Dalton are the traditionalists, beloved by Conference delegates, while Mr. Morrison and Sir Stafford Cripps, searching for a new Fabian approach, find their support among the non-political voters.

During the next twelve months, a programme must be worked out which will give a new content to the word Socialism. There is no doubt that the peoples outside the Russian bloc have swung Right since 1945. The gravitational pull of the two foci of world power in Washington and Moscow has had its effect. Relying on Marshall Aid, Western Europe is rediscovering virtues in free enterprise. France and Italy have returned to old-fashioned capitalist financial methods, and find themselves in this respect in much closer accord with Belgium and Holland than with Socialist Britain.

Moreover, the failure of Uno, and in particular of such agencies as FAO, has shattered the VE-Day hopes that world planning could bring world prosperity, and induced a revival of reactionary nationalism sufficient to unseat Field-Marshal Smuts and put into power in South Africa an anti-British coalition whose only clear mandate is a policy of White racialism. This is only one symptom of a world revulsion against international planning. It is not belied by the limited progress achieved by the participants in Western Union. As the protracted dispute over Western Germany shows only too clearly, Western Europe, including Socialist Britain, is still concerned to defend national sovereignty, not to overcome it.

It is against this international background that the domestic swing to the Right must be judged. Recent public opinion polls provide evidence, which cannot be lightly dismissed, that the floating vote is still drifting away from the Labour Party. The British people—and, to judge by last week's referendum, the Australians too—are not in the mood to accept uncritically a further dose of nationalisation as a sufficient policy for Labour's second term of office. They will judge a Socialist programme on its merits, and the test will be how far it provides security from want, opportunity for initiative, and a chance of peace.

This does not mean that the public can only be appeased by the impossible attempt to return to free enterprise. But it does demand a recognition, first, that the slogans, which still stir a Labour audience, may find little response outside; and secondly, that the programme must be designed, not to take advantage of a surge of pro-Socialist optimism, but to halt a reaction of disappointment and frustration. This will not be achieved by the sterile friction of Right-wing and Left-wing phrase-makers. The programme must be constructed soberly and responsibly, not to achieve a Conference ovation, but to meet the crisis.

Compromise on Germany

The laconic communiqué announcing at long last the London agreement on Germany has been filled in with sufficient inspired comment to make it clear that what has been achieved is merely the paper compromise predicted in these columns. Though they have gained some concessions on secondary constitutional issues, the French have been given no real satisfaction on the Ruhr problem. Holding eight votes out of fifteen in the international control, the Anglo-Americans remain masters of German heavy industry, and the control itself will be only of export allocations, leaving ownership and production with the old gang. On the other hand, as a concession to the French, the time schedule, which was essential to the success of the Anglo-American plan for reviving Western Germany, has been ominously retarded, and trizonal fusion postponed until after the formation of a German Government. The hope that, in the absence of Russia, a Western agreement on Germany would be achieved, has been shown to be illusory. On the contrary, the protracted discussions about Germany have revealed a serious flaw in Western Union. Faced with American plans which they detested, the French demanded as a *quid pro quo* for their acceptance an American guarantee of the whole of Western Europe. In a Presidential year and in the absence of any American army worth speaking of, this demand could not be fulfilled. The agreement in effect covers up a failure to find either a basis for integrating Germany into Western Union, or concerting European and American strategy. It is by no means certain that the French Assembly will ratify it; and, even if it does, there is a grave danger that its implementation will be so delayed that German recovery is perilously compromised.

Palestine Truce

The Jews and Arabs continue to debate the conditions of the truce to which they both have agreed in principle. But it is at least satisfactory to record that, in the discussion of the Security Council, Britain and America, for the first time, have shown some signs of a willingness to work together. The Americans were obviously embarrassed by having to vote for the Russian sanctions proposal, and were relieved when it was defeated. On the other hand, Sir Alexander Cadogan accepted three vital amendments to the strongly pro-Arab British draft, including the imposition of an embargo on the import of arms into the Arab States and the permission for Jewish immigration to continue provided the immigrants are given no military training during the truce. In Palestine itself the main fighting still centres round Latrun, where the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem road enters the defile at the foot of the central mountains. The Jews are exhausting themselves in their attempts to force their convoys through to beleaguered Jerusalem; the Arab Legion, unwilling to fritter away its strength in house-to-house fighting, has been content to keep the New City under shellfire and hold the strong defensive positions at Latrun. Elsewhere, it looks as though the Jews have successfully dealt with the Lebanese and Syrian armies in Galilee; and, despite its grotesque communiqués, there is no evidence that the Egyptian Army has done any serious fighting. The Egyptian Navy, on the other hand, has now completed the minefield along the Palestine coast, and its destroyers have successfully prevented the entry of any Jewish ship for a week. On land, the only serious battle is between the Haganah and the Arab Legion. Fighting honours seem to be pretty even, but the strategic advantage lies with the Legion.

Finnish Democracy

The upshot of the Finnish political crisis exhibited even more clearly than the recent treaty negotiations with Russia both the tactical skill of President Paasikivi and the strength of the Social Democrats. The crisis began because there was reason to suspect that Mr. Leino, the Communist Minister of the Interior, was trying to repeat the success of Mr. Nosek in Prague last February, by "reorganising" the police in preparation for the elections in July. When Mr. Leino was dismissed, the Communist Party threatened a general strike and called on the workers to set up Action Committees. But the movement collapsed ignominiously. At this point, when both the anti-democratic intentions and the weakness of the Communists had been exposed, the Government wisely offered a face-saving compromise. Hertta Kuusinen, the wife of Mr. Leino, and the ablest Finnish Communist, was brought into the Cabinet without portfolio; and simultaneously the Ministry of the Interior, as regards police matters, was placed under a Cabinet sub-committee. So Finland remains the sole parliamentary democracy behind the Iron Curtain.

Ratifying a Revolution

The Czech parliamentary election must be regarded as a pressurised plebiscite in which the February Revolution which ended Czech parliamentary democracy has been ratified. In the country as a whole the affirmative vote of confidence in the new National Front was 89 per cent. of the total poll—91 per cent. in Bohemia and Moravia, 86 per cent. in predominantly Catholic Slovakia. Apart, however, from the 11 per cent. of the voters who voted "no confidence" by dropping a blank paper into the ballot box, 955,000 out of the total electorate of 8,055,000 either did not vote or cast (deliberately or not) invalid votes. At the last election abstentions numbered 838,000, and the increase in the number of non-voters should presumably be added to the strength of the "opposition." What further percentage of the abstentions or invalid votes should be included with the "Noes" is a matter of guesswork. The Government appears to be gratified with the size of the "Yes" vote which it has received, though it can scarcely fail to note the significance of the substantial number of abstentions in an election in which there were heavy penalties for not voting.

"Round Three" in America

With the granting of substantial wage advances in quick succession by General Motors, General Electric, and the Chrysler Corporation, the Trade Unions in the United States appear to have got their way over the "third round" of the wages struggle. This is a rapid reversal of policy; for only a few weeks ago General Electric, as well as United Steel, was standing out strongly against any concessions. The large United States corporations seem to have made up their minds that the boom is likely to continue—thanks partly to war preparation and partly to Marshall Aid—and that any big battle with the Congress of Industrial Organisations had better be deferred until later—perhaps until the elections are safely over. The advances, which range from 11 to 13 cents an hour, may or may not lead to a further rise in prices; but they are certainly likely to check any tendency towards a reduction. Meantime, Mr. Lewis and the coal operators are still at a deadlock over the inclusion of the Southern operators in the negotiations for a new contract to replace the present one, which expires in July; but the fear of a stoppage of coal supplies does not seem to be seriously felt. The C.I.O. has undoubtedly scored a big success, in face of the hampering provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act. For us, unfortunately, the situation means a continuance of high prices for American supplies—but even that may be preferable to the unpredictable consequences of an American slump.

Food from Ireland

The new Eire Government, it is said, has decided to abandon the system, introduced during the war, which made the growing of wheat compulsory on much land on which it could be grown only with the aid of a heavy subsidy. This decision, if it is acted upon, will mean a considerable shift over to the production of meat, bacon, eggs, and other foodstuffs for which Great Britain is the obvious market. It will also mean more dollars both for grain and for those feeding-stuffs of which Eire has been deplorably short in recent years. Marshall Aid should help them; and it should become much easier to negotiate a large-scale food bargain between Eire and Great Britain—much to the benefit of the Irish as well as of the British people. The great outstanding question is that of the sterling prices which Great Britain is to agree to pay. The strong Irish delegation which is coming here to negotiate will try to get a substantial advance on the prices in force under the present agreement, and will argue that what Great Britain has conceded to other European suppliers cannot be refused to the Irish farmers. Indeed, as the prospect of a fall in world prices recedes further and further, Great Britain is being pushed from more and more quarters to pay more in sterling, which is thus depreciating in practice even without any devaluation. There is still a tendency for the terms of trade to worsen, with the consequence that the import-export gap is a good deal further from being closed than was hoped even a few months ago. Still, we must have the food, and higher sterling prices are better than dollars as means of paying for it.

PARLIAMENT: Odd Alliances

Wednesday

STRANGE things happened this week. The Prime Minister answered for the Foreign Secretary; a Socialist applauded Gandar Dower of Caithness; Solley was cheered by the Tories; and Hugh Dalton, the spectre that had been haunting the Opposition, materialised as Chancellor—well, anyhow, Chancellor of the Duchy. (". . . Old mole! Canst work i' the earth so fast?" muttered a dissatisfied Tory.)

Mayhew, *vice* Foreign Secretary, had already half-strangled himself with casuistries about the Arab Legion's exercises in Palestine, when he announced that the Prime Minister would speak later. Question: Where was Bevin? Answer: On the tail end of the Front Bench. Like a witness whom Counsel wouldn't call, the Foreign Secretary sat subdued while the Prime Minister entered into recognisances for his future statement.

Solley then rose to make some respectful submissions to Mr. Speaker about a question which he had wished to put to the Minister of Transport on the shutting-down of a railway station in his constituency. This closely touched the matter of Ministerial responsibility in nationalised industries, and the Tories, who reach for their guns when Solley says "Rumania," cheered what they felt might be an embarrassing question for the Government.

There were only two or three Tories to hear Gandar Dower speak on Scottish Civil Aviation—he is not the most popular member of the Tory back-benches—but the Labour members listened attentively to his polite attack on Government policy. George Lindgren, the Parliamentary Secretary, was compelled to remind Gandar Dower that the Government had subsidised his firm before the war; while another Member was heard to remonstrate that "After all, there *is* a war on."

On Tuesday began the late nights of the Finance Bill, the long hours of sausage-eating and tea-drinking in between which Members improve their voting records with numerous divisions. Many a headline in the local paper is made by Member after Member. And the "special interests" in the Public Gallery hiss inaudibly, and sometimes audibly, as Glenvil Hall, now almost an institution in the part of Financial Secretary to the Treasury, considers and rejects representations with skill and amiability. Appeals to amend the tobacco tax, the beer tax and the bookmakers tax were all turned down by the Chancellor, though not before curious lines of agreement—between the Tory E. P. Smith and Gallacher on the tobacco tax, for example—had emerged. There were also some interesting disagreements. Is beer good for the working class? Piratin thought it was all right if they wanted it, and he urged the reduction of the tax. Hudson, a Labour teetotaller, thought it was bad for them, and that any tax to discourage beer-drinking was a good thing. In order to make quite sure that Piratin understood his point of view, Hudson quoted Lenin as having said that the way back to Capitalism is through drink. Piratin asked for the text.

In the Lords, meanwhile, the debate on the abolition-of-hanging clause had been resumed. Lord Llewellin, sanguine of complexion and rather choleric in manner, moved its rejection. The judges who followed him were for hanging. Most of the Tory peers, except Lord Merthyr, were for hanging too. Humanitarians like Lord Pethwick-Lawrence and Lord Stansgate maintained the traditional view of the Labour Movement when humanitarianism was still the first article of a Socialist's faith. Their view of killing, whether by hanging or assault, was a simple one. They were against it. One of the newer Labour peers, Lord Lucas, declared that as the allegedly ill-informed mob elected the Commons, the Commons must follow the current trend of opinion of "this ill-informed mob."

In spite of this crude simplification of the theme, it seemed that the Lords would, on balance, ask the Commons to modify their attitude, introducing perhaps degrees of murder. Whether the Government, sympathetic to the rejection but not to the rejectors, will complain, is not yet known. There is, however, no truth in the report that after the Debate Herbert Morrison was heard humming, "Praise the Lords, but pass the ammunition."

MAURICE EDELMAN

POLITICS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The project of a Commonwealth Conference is a belated victory for public opinion—or at least an informed section of it. If the Imperial Conference was not to perish altogether, it may be asked, indeed, why it was not called very soon after the end of the war, when the shape of post-war problems began to reveal itself. Opportune occasions came and went: nearly three years passed, and it began to look as if the institution of full-dress conference of all the Dominion Governments, represented by their Prime Ministers, was defunct. But when the project of Western Union brought certain latent Commonwealth problems to a head, opinion became vocal, here and in some of the Dominions, and the Governments felt themselves obliged to respond.

Public opinion, clinging to the somewhat hazy idea that the Commonwealth Governments ought to get together round a table, had powerful antagonists. Officials dislike big Ministerial Conferences: the official view was and probably still is that Commonwealth co-operation proceeds very well on its established lines, which work swiftly and silently from day to day, and can gain little or nothing from the exchanges of generalities to which a large gathering is prey. Official inertia has been a valuable ally of political objection in some at least of the Dominions. Mr. Mackenzie King, deft to a fault in avoiding making political enemies, has always disliked exposing his Government to criticism on the ground that it had committed Canada to a Commonwealth policy or in the least depreciated her national sovereignty. General Smuts, boldly as he had nailed his colours to the Commonwealth mast, was not anxious to go out of his way to give an election point to his Nationalist opponents. Dr. Evatt, the most powerful Australian figure in these matters, has always seemed readier to have the Commonwealth conform to Australian policy than Australia conform to Commonwealth policy, and has accordingly been well content to rest upon such devices as the Australian-New Zealand agreement and the Canberra Conference on Pacific issues, in which Australia could exercise a natural regional paramountcy. New Zealand has not exerted much influence one way or the other; and, as for India and Pakistan, they have been far too much pre-occupied with their own difficulties and quarrels to concern themselves much with problems of the British Commonwealth, even if their Governments had been surer than in fact they are of their political ground in taking any positive steps that seemed to imply commitment to maintaining the Commonwealth connection.

These inhibitions will not vanish merely because a Commonwealth Conference is convened; nor, certainly, have they been diminished as a result of General Smuts's defeat in South Africa, which will complicate British relations with India and Pakistan. They will tend to clog its work and frustrate its achievement. To overcome them will require statesmanship of the first order. On the side of statesmanship will be the urgency of the issues that have to be settled. The Dominions, who were quite content that on Palestine, for example—a problem just as likely as anything in Western Europe to give rise to world war, and quite as vital to the Commonwealth generally as Europe itself can be—the Commonwealth should be utterly without a common approach, let alone a united policy, have become suddenly vocal about the dangers to Commonwealth unity that lurk in the closer affiliation of Britain with her neighbours in Europe. European action goes forward week by week, impelled by hard economic necessity and dread of the Communist East. Commonwealth policy, if it is to stay in the same race with European policy, has to run fast to keep up; it is already a lap behind.

Basically, the problem is one rather for the Dominions than for Britain. We in these islands cannot escape belonging to Europe. We have neither the predominant strength nor the geographical isolation to remain outside the Western European concert. Inside it, we can powerfully influence others while benefiting ourselves. Outside, we are the plaything of forces too strong for us to direct. For us there is really no choice. The choice, if it exists, is one rather for the Dominions to make. Are they prepared to come in with us into the circle of Western Powers, recognising that fundamental interest as well as imperial ties commit them anyway to the consequences of what transpires in Europe in the future, just as it did in 1914 and 1939? Or will they take a chance on being able to decide in time and effectively when a still more critical moment comes later—recognising that such a policy weakens the Commonwealth in the same measure as it enlarges their own apparent independence? Statesmanship may suggest one answer: national politics may dictate another.

It is long odds that the Commonwealth Conference in its public pronouncements will seek some formula which will avoid presenting the issue in its naked simplicity. But the Ministers and their advisers cannot evade decisions on many points where the pressure of events will decide for them if they do not decide for themselves. The problem of Commonwealth defence is rapidly approaching such a crisis. The general undertakings of the U.N. Charter are being overtaken, not only by the staff talks under the Brussels Pact, but also by such happenings as the evacuation of Palestine or the end of the British Indian Army. These oblige the authorities to take military decisions having a direct and vital bearing on Commonwealth defence. How are the present military resources of the U.K. and the dependent Empire, strictly limited as they are, to be deployed? Along what lines are future research and development in defence to be directed? Decisions on these questions have to be taken now, and they must depend to some extent on the contribution the Dominions are ready to make to general security and the view they take of the importance of different arms and regions of defence. There is reason to believe that—with the exception of Canada, who is not so directly concerned—they are becoming very anxious about the position in the Middle East, always the keystone of Commonwealth defence because it blocks the way from Europe to that last haven of the Pax Britannica, the Indian Ocean.

Similarly, decisions about trade and finance cannot be indefinitely postponed or camouflaged. The contrast between imperial preference and closer economic union with Western Europe, so vividly presented by some enthusiasts for the Empire, is indeed too crude to be true. The Ottawa system began to decline soon after it was constructed: India repudiated it, and Canada, as well as ourselves in the United Kingdom, soon found it necessary to seek means of compromising with it in order to make trade agreements with the United States. To-day, preference is far less important in determining the lines of trade than various forms of exchange control, combined with government purchasing of food and raw materials. It is in that context that the member Governments of the Commonwealth will be looking at their joint economic problems when preparing for the Conference. Whatever may be said in favour of a self-sufficient Commonwealth economic unit, it is not an objective that appeals to the Dominions, or indeed to the Colonies that count for most as economic producers. The issue, therefore, is very different from the straight choice between preference and no preference. It is whether United Kingdom policy can be so directed in the talks on Western European customs union as to enable the Dominions and Colonies as well as Britain to benefit from a wider European market, and can do so without sacrificing either the principle that preferences within the Commonwealth are a "family affair," which we regulate for ourselves, or all the material advantages that preference now affords us in Empire markets—a much more delicate question than the one posed by Mr. Amery and his associates!

In economics as in other spheres, the Commonwealth is now manifestly moving in a new era. That is the main justification for a Commonwealth Conference; for new understanding and new ideas are needed, and cannot be born of the intermittent and official co-operation on which Commonwealth relations ordinarily rely. It is an era of difficulty and danger, in which the grim tasks of keeping our peoples from want and fear overshadow the formal political problems that so exercised Imperial Conferences between the wars. Nevertheless, a Commonwealth Conference which brings to the table for the first time three new Asiatic Dominions, two at least of which are hesitant about their future relations with the Commonwealth, cannot avoid discussing constitutional problems, in the wide sense of the form and expression of our mutual relations. The whole trend is towards changing the Commonwealth into an association of independent States owing no common allegiance, though having relations with each other different in kind from those which they maintain with "foreign" countries. Integral to this development is the British Nationality Bill now before Parliament, designed as it is to give the United Kingdom itself, like the Dominions, a distinct "citizenship" which in the end will doubtless come to be its effective "nationality," even though British subjecthood or Commonwealth citizenship remains as the common "status." And the broad question posed by that Bill is one that will recur again and again in our relations with the rest of the Commonwealth at the forthcoming Conference and elsewhere: shall the influence of the United Kingdom be directed towards easing the transformation of a Commonwealth bound by common allegiance into one associated by common convenience, or towards halting it? It may well be a choice between a large, loose Commonwealth and a smaller, compact one. But however unpleasant the choice may be, the calling of a Commonwealth Conference obliges us to face it—and the Dominions to face it too.

PICKING THE WINNERS

"It's a good quid's worth. Better than Butlins," said one of the candidates towards the end of his 48 hours at Stoke d'Abernon. "The rooms in the huts are very decent and the tests are quite fun."

Lord Cherwell thought they were "quite fun," too, but his information was second-hand and mostly inaccurate. Intelligence tests and psychologists are the stock joke of the rooted traditionalist slow to adapt himself to change. If you distort them sufficiently, and rip them out of context, they sound particularly amusing in the quiet sedateness of the House of Lords. However, Lord Cherwell, on his performance in the Lords' Debate on May 26, would have done well at the Civil Service Selection Board. He would have been marked high for a lively imagination, pleasing personality, acute intelligence, lucidity and effectiveness in the presentation of his views. His conventionality and willingness to conform to prevailing standards would have registered him outstandingly suitable as that admirable type of civil servant who does not incautiously initiate experiments, but is quick-witted enough to approve them when their success has been established beyond doubt by others. And we must have some like that to keep the ship steady. He would, alas, have been marked down, but not enough to disqualify him, for failure to verify his facts before giving an opinion, if not for a naiveté and astonishing credulity displayed in his readiness to believe tall stories. If there was, as he suggested, "a highly coloured young woman" at Stoke d'Abernon casting languishing glances at the candidates and saying "Mother," then they kept her from me; and remembering the courtesy and kindness of the staff, I do not believe they would have been so cruel as to do that. Of course, Lord Cherwell

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would have been on his best behaviour for his forty-eight hours, and his regrettable tendency towards arguing from unsound premises and unchecked facts might not have been detected. But the triumvirate of Chairman, Observer and Psychologist, which constitutes each Group Board, can't be expected to know everything. *α*—, or almost *α*, would have been his mark.

For the candidates it certainly is "a good quid's worth" (a pound is now the only charge made to those trying to get in the Civil Service). The surroundings and the food are agreeable, the strain is not overheavy, the chances to demonstrate ability are greater than in a more formal examination. Even more important, the detailed individual interviews give an opportunity to the candidate to re-consider whether the Civil Service is really his vocation. Some clearly change their minds during their stay and are the happier for it. That, no doubt, is why the overwhelming majority of candidates think the procedure is fair, whether they feel themselves to have failed or succeeded. And failure does not necessarily mean deficiency in intellect or capacity. Mr. Churchill would not have got through. In the first place, he would not have possessed the essential academic qualification of second-class honours. In the second place, (supposing that obstacle had not existed) although he would have dominated every discussion he took part in, his evident inability to consider the views of others and to work harmoniously in any team or committee of which he was not the head, would have properly deterred the examiners from passing him out.

The Civil Service Selection Board is designed to find potentially high-ranking civil servants of the Assistant and Under-Secretary level, not explorers, politicians, Nuffields or artists. Originally it was a temporary expedient for enlisting into the Civil Service ex-servicemen who had been away from their books during the war and who naturally could not tackle the stiff pre-war Civil Service examination. The results have been so satisfactory that for at least ten years Stoke d'Abernon will provide one of the two methods for selecting entrants. The Foreign Office will have no one who has not been through the process. The Home Civil, slower to be convinced, will take a quarter by the new method and three quarters by the old. That is what all the fuss is about.

University dons, accustomed to seeing the prizes awarded solely to those skilled at passing the sort of examinations which they set, are alarmed at this deeper probing. Yet, before the war, thirteen per cent. of Civil Service entrants never got beyond the rank of Principal. Preliminary follow-up reports on the first 114 to get into the Home Civil by the new methods show that 74 are already regarded as "outstanding" or "very good," and only one is thought to be "poor." Further reports supplied by high-grade civil servants, not noted for their optimism, add that 70 should reach the Under-Secretary level, or higher, and that none will stop at Principal.

The aim of the tests is to reveal whether the owner of an excellent intellect is likely to be good at dealing with people, with practical matters and with the shaping of policy. As Sir Percival Waterfield has pointed out, many scholarship winners manifestly are not. Stoke d'Abernon is in effect a protracted interview conducted by a shrewd and balanced team. The candidates are split up into groups of six or seven. Their written work in the Qualifying Examination, and during the tests, is read by all the members of their Board. Their informal discussions on set subjects, and their remarks at mock committee meetings, are listened to carefully. Comparisons are made of their reactions at individual interviews. Past records are studied and given great weight. Candidates who misfire on the surface are not always ruled out, if other factors counterbalance an indifferent first impression. As the hours go by, characters and potentialities begin to clarify under well-directed observation. One or two in my group, who began well, faded out; others came on strongly. A superficial charm, so valuable at a brief interview, failed to stay the course. It may be no recommendation that I agreed, in each case but one, with the conclusions of the Board I was attached to, but perhaps I may be excused if it gave me confidence.

For the information of Lord Cherwell and others, the Psychologist did not talk about fixations and Oedipus complexes. Under his tests the candidates were graded from 1–7 in general intelligence. Five, six and seven indicated a high-powered intelligence. Four was average but nothing out of the ordinary. One, two and three were not so hot. Watching the candidates, it was difficult to disagree. The Psychologist's further contributions consisted of comments which went a little deeper into the make-up of the candidate's personality than did those of his two colleagues. The Observer concentrated more on the visible intellectual attributes of the candidate and his capacity to apply them. The Chairman, a civil servant of considerable eminence, reconciled the views of the other two and added his own judgment. All three had academic records of some distinction. None were actuated by class prejudice.

When the Civil Service Selection Board was set up, its members went round the Departments to find out exactly what was wanted. At first they met a lack of definition as to the precise qualities which made a good civil servant. Everyone could readily supply the clichés: integrity (top of the list), brains, capacity for sustained hard work, reliability, loyalty, persuasiveness, commonsense, practicality. On the difficult question of how far a change in the nature of society demands a corresponding change in the Civil Service there was some vagueness. Gradually it became clear that the Civil Service was realising that the emphases in its structure were shifting. The official who is remote, aloof and impersonal is less and less required. To-day, few civil servants avoid direct contact with human beings. Planning for industry, co-operation with local authorities, and all the manifold activities which have brought Government closer to the people call for an increasingly humane approach based on an understanding of the difficulties of others, and on the ability to put across policies simply and intelligibly. Some backroom boys are still needed, but not so many. "Cleverness" remains a pre-requisite, but the civil servant himself must now have the common touch. He cannot simply rely on the undoubted asset of having a stupid Minister through, and by, whom his actions have to be explained.

Those, roughly, are the terms of reference. As far as one could judge, they were being complied with. The methods used could be adapted to furnish a guide for suitability for almost any occupation. I.C.I., and Unilevers, are employing similar though not so comprehensive tests; and what is good enough for private enterprise should be good enough for Lord Cherwell. The Boards of nationalised industries would do well to specify their requirements to Stoke d'Abernon and so ensure a high standard of ability in recruits to their administrative posts. The Ministry of Labour might also consider dropping their departmental insularity for the moment and making use of the same machinery to fit applicants into business posts.

The only justification I heard of the Home Civil's refusal to take all their entrants through this method was that a brilliant man might be lost if he did not react well to the atmosphere of the Civil Service Selection Board. He would be a strange man indeed. However "dour" a Scot he was, he would have ample chance to demonstrate his underlying intellectual powers, in his written work and in his interviews. It is possible that the Board might enter a warning against the peculiarity of his temperament, but most likely they would recommend running the risk—if he showed the slightest signs of thawing out later. Otherwise they would rightly put him in the category of the thirteen per cent. who failed to get past the grade of Principal before the war. But in any case the final decision rests with the Final Selection Board of the Civil Service Commission and not at Stoke d'Abernon. It is one up to Ernest Bevin that he has insisted on this practical system of preventing his office from being cluttered up by irremovable and ineffective scholars who would be better employed as dons.

WOODROW WYATT

DEMONSTRATION BY THE LEFT

THERE were no elections in Czechoslovakia on Sunday. The process is better known as "mass education." The eleven per cent. who cast blank ballot papers were those who refused to accept this form of education. There is no sense in discussing what a free vote would have produced; any election depends on the nature of the choice offered, and no choice was offered. Few are enthusiastic about voting for a blank sheet of paper, especially when the names of the Members of Parliament who are to be elected are known before the vote. The officials in the polling booths were Party members, and everyone had openly to throw away one or other of the ballot papers. There was certainly an element of risk, especially in villages or small towns where people know each other. I do not think that the actual votes were noted by anybody in Prague in the polling booth I saw, but in one village two women whispered to me that they were afraid to vote for the blank ballot. The only way of hiding one's vote was to put, for example, a photograph of Dr. Benes in the envelope—that is, to spoil one's voting paper and then throw the blank ballot into the wastepaper basket. I saw several Government ballots openly discarded; and sometimes a voter would crumple up his paper, so that one could not see what he had thrown away. But this was not in any sense an election as we understand the term; it was a demonstration by the Left.

Some Communists whom I know were rather shamefaced about the whole affair. They were proud that they had cut through the knots of democracy and taken the straight road to Socialism, but they did not themselves believe that it was good to identify the Opposition with disloyalty to the State. The main line of propaganda was that the National Front stood for security against Germany, a sentiment which appeals to every Czech. A placard in one public square in Prague listed those for whom, it said, the vote for the blank ballot paper would really be cast. Those named included Judas Iscariot, Columbus (who discovered America), as well as Heydrich, Henlein, Hitler and Runciman. In short, the object was to build up the idea that to vote for the white paper was a betrayal of the country.

Such an experiment in "mass education" in Eastern European countries, where there never have been free elections, is intelligible enough; but in Czchoslovakia, where political democracy has been highly developed, people felt a great sense of degradation; it was an attack upon their self-respect. My Communist friends say that in the crisis they were tired of the obstructions of political parties which were not sincere in co-operating with the agreed programme of Socialism, and they took advantage of a foolish Right-wing manoeuvre to seize power for themselves. They undoubtedly have most of the organised workers behind them, just as they have the majority of the middle-class against them. The question now is how far the revolution will go.

There is a "terror" only in the sense that people are afraid of losing their jobs. Some who were purged in State industries have been reinstated. This is very much a managerial revolution, and its leaders are fully aware of the need of technicians. The most unhappy feeling I found was in the University, where demonstrating students had been forcibly dispersed on several occasions. There has been a severe purge, particularly in the Jurisprudence Department:

some professors have been sacked, others given indefinite leave on half-pay. Professors complain that student Action Councils are given the right to question them on the marks they allot in the examinations. This is a precaution against reactionary professors which was once tried in the U.S.S.R. but long ago abandoned. There is much fear among such professors that the standard of education is endangered. Some students have been deprived of their right to finish courses at the University, and there has been more than one attempt at suicide amongst them. Many army generals and other officers have been sacked.

Some say this is only the excess of revolutionary zeal at the beginning of a revolution, and the able and devoted Communists, mainly trained in the Western tradition, whom I know in Czechoslovakia, are unhappy about this tendency, and hope for more toleration in future. I am not sure they are right. In the past, when police have been given a free hand, the story has been of a progressive increase in terror. I shall be happy if in six months' time I find that suppression has not increased in Czechoslovakia. It is sad in this country, where we hoped for a genuine national development towards Socialism based on the free unity of the progressive parties, to find foreign newspapers confiscated and suppressed in Prague, no doubt because of the speeches of emigré Czech leaders in England.

The Czechoslovak people are solid and educated. The great majority were ready enough for a Socialist programme, but in a country which could not be in any case subjected, as its neighbours might be, to some Fascist *Putsch*, the drastic step that was taken in February and the pretence of elections which I witnessed, seem unnecessary, foolish and tragic.

Budapest, June 1. KINGSLEY MARTIN

A LONDON DIARY

THE gist of the letters of reproof I have received after my recent article on the delays in repatriating German prisoners of war from the Middle East, is that a number of these men are unrepentant Nazis at heart. This, I think, is probably true. But I still cannot see that if a man has remained a Nazi, after being a prisoner among us for years, he will be any the better for being turned into a homosexual as well. Nor do I feel that a dyed-in-the-wool Nazi is the more likely to abandon his own way of thinking, and come round to ours, if we officially tell him a date by which he may expect to go home, as unfortunately we have, and then fail to get him there.

* * *

All this brings me to a question which has interested me more and more lately, as I accumulate evidence of the surprising interpretations various people can put on the same sentences when they read them in cold print. (Apparently if people can see someone's mouth flapping about behind his or her speech, it is much easier to follow the meaning. Bewildering as their questions sometimes are, lecture audiences seem rarely so far off the point as correspondents commenting on one's journalistic efforts.) How many readers, even of a journal like this, do really read the words from which they certainly extract an impression of some sort? Everyone who writes professionally knows the rarity of the comment which sticks to the subject under discussion, praising or damning the author for what he has actually written. Every novelist has been embarrassed, with the kindest intentions, by the reader who says on introduction: "I'm so glad to meet you, I've wanted to tell you for ages how much I enjoyed that book of yours about the stowaway." To say, "I never wrote a book about a stowaway," seems ungracious in the circumstances. To ask cautiously, "Now which book, I wonder, about a stowaway?" only embarrasses the reader in return, because he or she has usually forgotten the title. If the author thinks hard, there is sometimes—not always—a clue in a reference to what is often a minor character who worked his passage somewhere as a steward. About every six months I get a charming letter from an unknown reader living in Finchley: she reports the progress or otherwise of "our cause." A lover of animals, she wants various changes in the law, to protect them better: all excellent changes, they sound, but it could hardly be considered *my* cause, as I have never done anything about it myself, I'm sorry to say. The letters date from the publication of a book of mine in which I was mildly satirical at the expense of a character who never actually appears in the story at all, but is referred to as an example of single-mindedness. "She took the outbreak of the war with equanimity. 'Now this,' she said, 'will stop the worn-out horse traffic with Belgium.' And it did, of course." In moments of depression the shaking suspicion comes to every writer, I suspect, that it's those who have taken the trouble to comment on his stuff who have paid most attention to it. So what on earth have the rest made of it?

* * *

The case reported in all the papers last week, of extraordinary brutality to a girl of 16, for which the man concerned got a seven-year sentence, will almost certainly bring to light a series of other cases, not perhaps so extreme but similar in nature. This occurred after the O'Neil case (the boy on the farm who died after repeated batterings), and the "Specky apple" trial, of a mother who developed a savage hatred for a small girl. A number of horrid happenings to other children, which had been going on unchecked for some time, with the knowledge of the neighbours, were at once reported to the police or some other guardian authority. It seems odd that the consciences of neighbours should be less easily jogged into action by the screams of an ill-treated child than by the records of court proceedings, but perhaps the main value of such a trial as the one in Dundee is not the lifting of terror from one pathetic girl, important as that obviously is, but the encouragement given to people who prefer minding their own business, to reflect that if someone somewhere else has got seven years for cruelty, that beastly fellow down the road ought to get something too; and probably will, if they speak up.

* * *

The remarkable feature of the recent case was not, unfortunately, the cruelty, of which instances are all too common, but the curious observations made by people connected with the trial. The judge in the summing-up told the jury there was essentially nothing wrong in parents or guardians beating a girl of 16, so long as it was done in such a way as not to offend her modesty. This may be so in law, but just how do you manage to beat a girl of this age within, as it were, these rules? A doctor called for the defence thought it worth stressing in his evidence that a child who had known no kindness or affection at home was sullen and suspicious at the beginning of an interview, and thawed so much at his apparently friendly interest that she became "almost flirtatious" in her forthcomingness at the end: he concluded this was a sign of inherent mental instability. In the circumstances, what other behaviour would anyone, even if not a doctor, expect? The defence lawyer put forward the excuse for her constant bashing-about that she was not a very nice little girl: under ghastly treatment she continued to steal and tell lies. How hard this Cinderella myth dies!—the idea that mishandled people ought at least to have lovely natures. It goes all against the romantic grain to accept that anyone who is kicked enough, becomes really kickable.

* * *

With real instances of cruelty to the young cropping up so often, one hesitates to write anything which might seem to condone even the mildest use of violence towards them, but here is a personal experience which suggests what one might call the rarity value of violence in the home. My small boy bit his nails badly, for years. I have a phobia about nail-biting. Bribery—"If they're nice for a week, you go to an extra pantomime"—worked no improvement. Nor did deprivation of sweets after lapses. I was advised to take him to a child psychiatrist. The first we tried told me the child bit his nails because he was suffering from inverted aggression; on no account must I attempt to interfere with this important outlet for a condition which the psychiatrist was anxious to try to turn right-side-up. Treatment to cost four guineas a week and take possibly a year. The child has always been a fatly cheerful one, exceptionally good-tempered. I pointed this out and was told that this was the result of the aggression being inverted. But what, I wanted to know, was the advantage of having a jolly and gentle lad turned into a normally aggressive one, since the nail-biting, the doctor said, had progressed from a consolation to a habit, and might or might not be improved by the treatment? I was assured it would be better for the child's natural development, said I preferred aggression inverted, paid three guineas, and left.

* * *

To the next consultant I explained carefully at the start that I didn't want the child cured of anything whatever except nail-biting. This was a more expensive man, in the Harley Street district. He said that, before making any diagnosis, he must have four one-hour periods, two with the boy and two with me. That cost ten guineas. After the last interview he told me there was nothing that could be done about nail-biting anyway, but he disagreed with the first man in thinking that it mattered if I persisted in discouraging it, since the trouble was due to the boy being fixated upon me, not to any exceptional degree of aggression, normal or inverted. I tried one more psychiatrist. This last noted that the boy was unusually free of social shyness. At the age of eight he really should, the doctor thought, be fixated upon someone, normally the mother, but it appeared that he wasn't. This of course accounted for the nail-biting, symbol of insecurity, which was in the circumstances incurable. This psychiatrist was a much nicer one than the others: having no useful advice to give, he suggested no fee.

* * *

I went home from this interview with a raging headache, born of frustration I suppose, and started to make currant buns for the boy's tea, so that I had the wooden cooking spoon in my hand when he came back from school, with his nails chewed further down than I had ever seen them: they looked revolting. I said, "This is going to stop!" and smacked both hands with the safely rounded back of the spoon. I was very shocked at myself, and so was he. It was the first (and last) time that anything of the kind happened in our home; otherwise, of course, it wouldn't have been so startlingly effective. Ten fat black rims grow on ten small fingers, and have, ever since. That was a year and a half ago. There have been, so far as the non-psychiatric eye can see, no adverse repercussions from the complete and immediate cure: aggression, if present, remains cheerfully inverted.

* * *

Whenever a murder, particularly fruity from the news-vendor's point of view, is reported in the papers, I wonder with regret what has happened to the persuasive old man who used to sell them outside Strand tube station in the evenings, some time ago. He had a habit of whispering confidentially in one's ear as one passed, "That's a 'orrible carving-up in Balham tonight, isn't it?" (Tonight meant in tonight's paper). Or "Nasty way that mother done in her family in Brighton, wasn't it? Fancy 'er using a 'atchet on all four!" He must have put up the local sales of his papers considerably in the rush hour, when one was slowed up in passing by the crowd, and his technique could really come into play. When he disappeared from his pitch I can't say for certain; a loss of this kind doesn't date itself in one's mind, but gradually there came a feeling, which I'm sure must be shared by thousands of his

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ex-customers, that murders in the evening papers are not what they were, without those friendly introductions, that intimate assumption of shared human weakness. While he worked there, crime, in the west end of the Strand, had a cosy atmosphere of Whatever-will-they-cut-up-next? Which seemed to reduce its normal sordidness.

E. Arnot Robertson

NOT CRICKET

We cannot support the United Nations when it suits us in Persia and Greece and oppose it when it does not suit us in Palestine.—*Manchester Guardian* May 27.

There's a blinding light on the Uno Test,—
  There's a bumping pitch, and a deafening din—
It's Bevin's Britons against The Rest,
  He's won the toss, and Cadogan's in.
And it's no mere matter of batsmanship,
  As the Laws of Cricket in haste they frame,
But the Captain's word flies from lip to lip—
  " Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The mortars scatter the desert sand
  As the Arab Legion marks up its score—
Should British guns shell the Holy Land
  Till the British team wins the holy war?
Yes; King Abdulla has joined the Club,
  The Foreign Office is free from blame,
And the voice of the Captain calls to Glubb—
  " Play up! play up! and play the game!"

It's a sticky wicket for Bevin's side,
  But the Captain orders " Go in! stonewall!"
The Laws of Cricket must be your guide,
  If you're caught at point, then claim " No ball!"
The Rest, not trained in our manly schools,
  Would not play fair if they did the same,
For only Britons may change the rules—
  " Play up! play up! and play the game!"

Gromyko bowls and Cadogan snicks,
  But though crowds roar that his fate is sealed,
To the Umpire's " Out!" he answers " Six!"
  Flings down his bat, and leaves the field.
The Laws of Cricket once more are read
  To crown an innings of deathless fame,
While the Captain sits on the Umpire's head—
  " Play up! play up! and play the game!"

Sagittarius

THIS ENGLAND

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The magistrate said he could understand a motorist being annoyed if he had to move his car after only a few minutes from outside his own house, but when a Royal car was coming along it made all the difference in the world.—*Daily Telegraph.* (Catherine Sharp.)

A reviewer must be honest. The present reviewer is bound to confess that Miss ———'s book offends against such taste as he has and such feelings as live in his mind about the mystery of things. Why should Miss —— write about ladies "picking up their skirts and showing their lovely legs to the men"?—Book Review in *Spectator.* (R. Cross.)

Col. —, the publisher, heard last night's Twenty Questions and later said he was so disgusted with an "object" chosen—*Queen Mary's umbrella*—that he was returning an order for books sent to his firm by the B.B.C.—*News Chronicle.* (Peter Burbidge.)

Much has been said and written of late years of the unfortunate Emperor and Empress (of Russia), but I will say no more here than that the Emperor, had he been an Englishman, would have been the most perfect type of English gentleman. From *Old Diplomacy: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst* (John Murray, 1947).

"X" MARKS THE SPOT

On the gable-ends of the houses that line the Dumbarton Road, the main thoroughfare on the north bank of the Clyde, there are giant hoardings for posters. Between the gins and the headache tablets is the current Government design of a chimney waggishly flying a Union Jack and encircled by a banner bearing the device " More and more production." The production of Clydeside is ships. There is a threat of less and less production.

The shipping situation of Clydeside is of interest not only because it is integrated with Scottish heavy industry as a whole, but because it bears on what is happening in shipyards throughout Britain. The immediate outlook is rosy. Ships in construction and orders on the books will keep the yards busy for two or three years at least. Why, then, worry?

There are unresolved problems, of which the first is steel. In one shipyard a Berth Erection Programme is pinned up for all to see. It is prepared by a joint committee of workers and management. The programme shows a syllabus of work to be done, for each ship on the stocks, over a period of four or five weeks. The items read like this: Start covering Strakes of Shell; Main Bulkhead Fwd.; Start Poop Deck; and so on. After an item there often appears a large capital X which means " dependent on steel allocation. In a five weeks' programme on one ship 7 out of 16 jobs are marked with X. On another, over a three weeks' forecast, 4 out of 6 are so marked. Those X's are not indications of past failures of delivery, but expectations of future failures that will interfere with the time schedule for building.

A programme tied to so many "ifs" and "buts" is now accepted as normal routine. It is not yet serious enough to result in complete stoppage of work, with the standing-off of workers. Time is frittered away until the steel arrives. The X's, at present, are no more than delaying factors, and show an appetite for material that is shared by industry throughout the country. Generally the yards are busy. There has been a great deal of reconversion work; but this is now easing off, so that the percentage of people engaged on new ships is higher. The war was the busiest time that Clydeside ever knew. So far, the post-war period has been the next best thing. There is, in some trades, a shortage of man-power; and this, combined with the steel shortage, means that, though the yards are busy, they are very far from working to capacity.

The Clydesider considers his industry vital, and he knows of the great need for shipping. In the recent *Economic Survey* he saw that shipping was brusquely treated: " The allocations (of steel) to ship-building cannot be materially increased." That is an implicit threat of unemployment. The Scottish T.U. Congress this year dealt with many resolutions on the shortage of steel. In the Clydeside pubs the workman simply says: " Why didn't we nationalise steel? Then we would know what's what. Look at the facts and figures for coal production. You can tell exactly what's happening." He feels there is more than meets the eye in the difficulties of getting scrap from Western Germany, or from other sources. As far as his own trade is concerned, will it be the same old story? " When they want ships they find us useful; when they don't want ships they don't give us a damn."

Facts and figures are what the Clyde shipyard worker understands, and he lacks them. Instead, there are signs and portents that are less easy to understand than comparative tables of tonnages and output. What is the position of the Clydeside of the future? What happens if the future is dominated—really dominated—by the dollar? The signs and portents make the future a matter of speculative pessimism. There was, for example, the recommendation in one of the Reports on Economic Aid to Europe that over six million tons of shipping on order should be sharply deferred till 1952 or later. Though applicable to Europe, the main single target of such a recommendation would be the Clyde. Meantime the Truman ship-building programmes are taking shape, unhampered by X's. And they appear formidable. America plans a large fleet of modern freighters, of cargo-cum-passenger vessels and of liners. The North Atlantic passenger trade is to be developed. Owing to the high costs of American building and operation it is believed that passenger traffic is to be captured with a backing of State subsidies. Why is it, the Clydesider asks, that the 1947 *Survey* had a target for British shipbuilding, but there is no target in the 1948 *Survey*—except for tankers? Then there was the reference in the Harriman Report to " the paradox of a high level of European construction and a large American surplus of dry cargo vessels." A strange paradox, since the American surplus vessels are hardly obtainable and are mostly unspecialised Liberty ships, of emergency value only until they can be replaced by new shipping. It would seem that Senator Taft's colleagues want to forbid Europe to buy, charter, or to build.

As long as the yards on Clydeside are busy, all this is like a bogy-man story without a bogy-man. There is nothing to grasp firmly. But Clydeside interprets things in its own manner, with a political outlook hammered out with the toughness of flame and steel—and a long memory of silent yards, ships rusting on the stocks and children frightened by the pains of hunger. It has known worse unemployment than any other part of Britain. In Clydeside the classic objects of Socialism and Communism have remained the same. The enemy is still capitalism. There is no illusion about the meaning of dollar hegemony. Besides, as long as America is in its present strategical frame of mind it has no reason for desiring a concentration of heavy industry in a region already written off except as a forward base. That is good policy for the Atomic War and fits very nicely with the competition of U.S. shipping and allied industries, eager to exploit their dominant position. There is one difference only—you cannot hunger-march to Washington.

Unfortunately there is little resiliency in Clyde industry. A five per cent. reduction in shipping means that about five per cent. of the workers sign on at the Labour Exchange. A shipworker, a man of the " black squad," rarely finds another trade. If Clydeside were to be severely hit, then the industrial belt of central Scotland would probably go with it. There are over 200,000 people engaged in smelting, founding, heavy engineering and shipbuilding.

That is the picture that is being discussed in committee rooms and at shop stewards' meetings. What will clarify the picture in the near future is what becomes overt in the detailed administration of Aid to Europe. The emphasis of the Paris Conference on trade across the Iron Curtain is of especial importance to Clydeside and the Scottish industrial belt. Here the economic future leads straight to the national question in the vision of a Scotland developing its own self-sufficient trade agreements, many *via* the Baltic and the Black Sea. Without a slump in the heavy industries there would be time to build up the second string of light industries, assuming always that Europe uses dollar aid as a temporary crutch and not as a winding-sheet.

So far the average man is unworried by this. Shop stewards and branch secretaries are known to be talkative people, full of foreboding, proceeding often by guess and by Marx. The ordinary shipworker believes in the reality of his regular pay-packet. Until work is suspended on a ship on the stocks he sees nothing to bother about beyond tomorrow. It is " his " Government in power. Probably he hopes to transfer his family to one of the new houses that are being built on the slopes above the river where there is a view into the interior of the country instead of the ever-lasting derricks and sheds and the plague of posters. Because Clydebuilt ships don't lose propellers or break their backs, he has an irrational confidence that the quality of his work will ensure employment—as long as there are ships to be built. The X's on the Erection Programmes are less important than those on the football forecasts. But behind the busy-ness, and the new houses, and the air of long-waited prosperity, Clydeside remains an acid test for European recovery.

NEIL MCCALLUM.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE COMMUNISTS

As was to be expected, the Ninth Inter-American Conference at Bogotá affirmed the solidarity of the hemisphere in the face of the "Communist menace." The façade of good neighbourliness was preserved, thanks to the revolt in the Colombian capital by which the Conference was interrupted; employment of Communism as the whipping-boy was a device most convenient to hand, to hide the deep and widening rift in relations between the United States and the republics to the south of the Rio Grande.

Are the Communists the real villains of the piece? For answer—a negative one—there is the testimony of no less an authority than Mr. Sumner Welles, who, as President Roosevelt's Secretary of State, was the patient architect of the "good neighbour conception." Commenting on events at Bogotá, Mr. Welles has stated that "the inter-American system is in real danger of collapse. For this, Communist intrigues are not responsible. It is due chiefly to our own policies in recent years."

In order to understand the nature of this charge, it is necessary to go back to the peak of inter-American good relations, the signing of the Act of Chapultepec in Mexico, in 1945. This document pledged all of the republics, including the United States, to joint consultation in the event of a threat to the sovereignty of any one of them. The Act established the principle of "hemispheric solidarity"—and no more than a principle it has since remained. For the Latin American republics made it clear that in their view the Act postulated economic as well as political and military co-operation, and that it opened the way for the establishment of the Inter-American Bank for which they had long pressed. This view has not been shared by the U.S.A.

Such a bank, with the power to grant loans for the industrialisation of "backward" countries, would enable the republics to shake themselves free from what they consider the tutelage of United States private capitalists. At the Rio de Janeiro Conference in the summer of 1947 the issue was again pressed strongly, and it would have figured more prominently at Bogotá, but for the dramatic diversion caused by the revolt. At both previous conferences the United States attitude had been that commitments elsewhere made it impossible for the U.S.A. to undertake long-term development projects in Latin America: the economic development of the other American republics must be left to private capital, with the assistance of such agencies as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the U.S. Export-Import Bank.

At Bogotá, Mr. Marshall was unable to hold out a materially brighter prospect. He produced a statement by Mr. Truman to the effect that loans for Latin America must come from an increased capital fund of the Export-Import Bank. This declaration the other delegates are reported to have received in deathly silence. Latin America feels that, after being wooed like a prospective bride for her food and raw materials by her good neighbour during the late war, she has been cast off like a discarded mistress now that her material goods are no longer in such urgent demand.

Is she about to turn to the expectant embraces of Soviet Russia? Not at this stage, though the Communist parties of Latin America would dearly like it to be so bruited abroad, and the recent publicity, however adverse, has no doubt been welcomed by them as calling attention to their continued existence. For, despite the declarations of the State Department in Washington, Communism is being forced back in Latin America from the very advantageous position it had gained by the end of the Second World War.

Two examples of this may be cited. The Chilean Communist Party has come nearest to real power of any in the sub-continent. In September, 1946, the Communists backed González Videla for the Presidency, and as a reward for their support received three Cabinet posts in the Government he formed upon his success. The party used its strategic position to seek to consolidate its hold upon the labour movement in the country, through the offices of the Communist Minister of Labour. When a rift developed in Videla's Cabinet, through the defection of the Liberals, leaving him to govern with his own Radicals in alliance with the Communists, opposition in the country threatened a possible breach of public order, and Videla at last was moved to turn the Communists out. They retaliated by using their influence in the trade unions to create strikes among the miners and transport workers. Videla called in the Army, rounded up the chief Communist leaders in the mining areas (where they had had a virtual monopoly), and granted wage concessions to dissident workers. The power of Communism in Chile has been temporarily broken when it was on the brink of success.

The other example concerns the personal history of Vincente Lombardo Toledano. This pro-Communist Mexican labour leader is one of the most able figures of the Latin American contemporary scene. During the war, when the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union were at amity, Toledano stumped Latin America as head of the Continent's T.U.C., the Confederación de Trabajadores de América Latina (C.T.A.L.), and welded this organisation into a cohesive force with a strongly pro-Soviet leaning. Since the end of the war much of his work has been undone. In his native Mexico, the Confederación de Trabajadores de México, the leading labour organisation which he has been chiefly responsible for building up, has been split by internal dissensions, and its influence much reduced. Non-Communist groups have risen into prominence, and last January they managed to secure Toledano's expulsion from the C.T.M., though so far all efforts to unseat him from the leadership of the C.T.A.L. have failed.

The decline of Communism might be expected to lead to the rise of Fascism. This is not so. There are Falangist and other avowedly Fascist parties in Latin America; and, if a dyed-in-the-wool Fascist dictator is in demand, he may be found in Somoza, real boss of Nicaragua. He, however, is pointedly ignored in that part of the world, very much as Franco is in Europe. Latin America has experimented with the Corporate State, the best example being the 15-year reign of Getulio Vargas in Brazil. Vargas, who was turned out by elections forced upon him when an Allied victory in the war seemed certain, has, outwardly at least, repented of his ways. He still aspires to power, but as "democratic" leader of a new working-class movement, the Partido Trabalhista, whose members are recruited mainly from the new industrial proletariat of the country.

In this he shows himself a disciple of "Peronismo," the title given to the technique by which President Juán Domingo Perón achieved power in Argentina. It is easier to dub Perón a Fascist than to prove him to be one. He is a dictator, certainly. But he is also the darling of the Argentine factory workers, whom he has taught to regard themselves as the élite of the New Argentina. When Perón declares: "We must double our production; we must multiply that by four by means of an adequate industrialisation . . . we must distribute that wealth equitably and raise the living standards of our hungry masses who constitute half our people," they fling their caps in the air in contemplation of the Golden Age. With industry the goal of every Latin American republic, as the symbol of desired independence from outside domination, Perón is bound to have his imitators. And they are bound to have a large following.

Among them possibly would have been Jorge Eliecer Gaitán of Colombia, whose murder touched off the Bogotá disturbances. Although his precise aims were not clear, he had established himself as the champion of the "hungry masses" and, as such, was the object of the animosity even more of the Conservatives than of the Communists. The masses of Latin America are hungry, and bread and circuses at this stage mean a great deal more to them than democracy. Unless and until Peronismo is proved to fail of its promises, its hold is not likely easily to be broken.

This movement, with its origin in all-White Argentina, stands for Latin control of the sub-continent. It speaks in terms of Hispano-America, is proud of its Catholic background and tradition, and lays stress upon the economic factor. A rival movement is gaining ground in Latin America, which challenges this concept, and serves as a reminder that 63 per cent. of so-called Latin Americans are of non-European stock, and that however "hungry" the Argentine *descamisado* ("shirtless one") in a Buenos Aires textile factory may be, the plight of the large Indian population of the sub-continent beggars description.

This Indian segment of the population (including the descendants of the Incas; mestizos, who are the outcome of mixed Spanish and Indian marriages; and the offspring of former Negro slaves) has found a champion in Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, head of the former Alianza Populár Revolucionaria Americana (A.P.R.A.), now the Partido del Pueblo, in Peru. Haya de la Torre is of a stamp altogether different from the Peronista leaders. He is an intellectual who has inspired the movement he leads; founded it on a basis of "People's Universities"; has suffered imprisonment and exile for the cause; and places the solution of the Indian problem high on his agenda. From the Aprista viewpoint, there is no future for Latin America which does not include the breaking up of the huge estates, the ending of peonage or the virtual slavery of the agricultural worker, and the establishment of the Indian as a literate and productive member of society.

Haya de la Torre speaks in terms of the "United States of Indo-America," challenging the doctrine of "White supremacy" and economic domination of the region by the new industrial states. His policy naturally has its appeal in other countries, especially where there is a large Indian majority; the Apristas claim that the Acción Democratica movement in Venezuela, the Partido Auténtico in Cuba, and the Partido Acción Revolucionaria in Guatemala are all putting into operation the principles of their leader.

In the immediate future these two movements, Peronismo and Aprismo, seem likely to contend for the allegiance of the resurgent masses of Latin America. The Communists have lost ground to both. When Perón won Argentina, the Communist Party became fellow travellers, leaving the real opposition in the courageous hands of the small but sound Argentine Socialist Party, led by Alicia Moreau de Justo, widow of the founder. In Peru, where the Apristas are said to have wrested control of 90 per cent. of the labour movement from the Communist Party, the latter has now joined with the Conservative landowners and the Catholic Church in denunciation of de la Torre. Elsewhere, the new nationalist movements are forming their own trade unions with the object of breaking what in some cases is a Communist stranglehold upon the working-class movement.

In effect, these developments seem to be the fruit of a desire by Latin Americans to be able to say to Washington and Moscow: "A plague o' both your houses!" But can they hope to retire thus into splendid isolation? Without U.S. dollars, through one channel or another, will it be possible to carry out ambitious schemes of industrial and agricultural development? And if these schemes break down through lack

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of dollars, will the indigenous parties be able to restrain disillusioned followers from flocking back under the Communist banner?

NORRIS WILLATT

QUEEN FOR A DAY

THERE is a certain type of radio show in America which, for the emotional excitement it arouses in its audience, compares with nothing I have ever seen. These shows, given to an audience and broadcast from a theatre, take various forms—quizzes, guesses, competitions—but all come under the general heading of lucky dips, entry-free contests where pure luck may win you fabulous prizes, prizes which can change the whole course of your life.

The "64-dollar question"—a phrase which has passed into the language—came from one of these programmes, a quiz where each question you answer correctly doubles the stake you can win. But you do not necessarily even have to answer questions. For instance, a few months ago there was a Favourite Mother-in-Law contest; sons-in-law and daughters-in-law were asked to send in the name of their mother-in-law—if they liked her. That was all. Over 5 million entries came in. The winner, an old lady from a remote village in New Mexico, got over 35,000 dollars in prizes. The net profit to her was a good deal lower, since winners have to pay taxes on their prizes. But still, as her daughter-in-law might say, it wasn't hay.

One of the biggest successes in this sort of show is put on each day by Mutual Radio in Hollywood. For three years now the "Queen for a Day" programme has started at 12 midday. Crowds, almost entirely women, line up from 6 a.m. outside the theatre; trying to get tickets, which are free, is like trying to get a steak in England. Black marketeers try again and again to corner them. The show lasts half an hour and the theatre holds about 1,500 people; by 12.30 p.m. one of them is Queen—and several thousand dollars to the good.

I went down the other day to watch "Queen for a Day." When I arrived at 11.30 they were warming-up; the Master of Ceremonies, a man called Jack Bailey who has become nationally famous through this programme (10,000 women went to meet him at the station when the show went on tour to Philadelphia), was keeping up quick-firing jokes with the packed audience. Each person had filled in a numbered card saying what they wanted to get if they were queen for a day; now they were sitting clutching their numbers, waiting for four men on the big stage to sort out 20 cards and put them in a hat. From these 20 the four finalists would be picked.

Sponsors of the programme (who pay for the prizes) were plugging their products; the M.C. was wisecracking, a band was playing—all done at a tremendous speed, all building up the tension, the sort of tension that you find in a gambling casino. Most of the assembled women were housewives, living in a modest way, desperately aware that the next half-hour might change their family's fortunes.

Then they started to call out the numbers. Behind me a woman screamed as her number came up. The numbers were all in four figures, and the announcer called them very slowly. People who thought they heard their number started to their feet, then sank down again almost in tears when they found they were wrong. Smart young men with carnation buttonholes went out into the audience to escort the twenty lucky people—some of them with such trembling knees that they had to be helped on to the stage. Then the final sorting—sixteen of them placed on each side of the stage as jury; the four potential queens at a table facing the audience. Nobody yet knew what the prizes for that day would be.

At this point the show went on the air, and one by one the four women were interviewed in front of the microphone. First was an old lady of 85 who was perkily aware of the sensation she caused when she said she had been married on Easter Sunday—a month ago. Asked what she would do if she were queen for a day, she said that she would go round the movie studios (the inevitable wish, I was told) and would buy a mattress with no bumps. This was good human stuff, good for a laugh, possibly even good for the prize. (But Jack Bailey told me afterwards that it is hopeless trying to bet on the winner; something incalculable always turns up.)

Next was a large, blonde girl who seized the microphone and shouted "hullo sweetheart" down it—obviously a promise to her husband who, it turned out, was in a naval hospital. She wanted a day-bed for her living room, so that when her husband came out of hospital he could have his buddies to stay. All this came out through tearful gulps—tears of nervousness and, I suppose, of painful anxiety. The audience liked her, and I put her chances rather higher than the old lady's.

There was a brisk interval of advertisements from the sponsors, and an announcement that one of the prizes for the day would be the loan for 24 hours of a Cadillac in which the queen would visit movie studios and go to some of the stars' homes. Then on again to number 3, a wistful, wan little girl from Fort Worth, with a fair plait of hair on top of her head, wearing a plain black suit. Her husband was still a student; she had a Solomon's problem with her two children, one of whom had to live in a damp climate and the other in a dry. She thought that she could solve it by having a desert air lamp which would enable the smallest child to stand the damp climate; otherwise she would have to send it away.

Finally, a plump jolly woman who wanted a new set of false teeth for her husband, so that he could get back his job as bugler in an Elks band. Good comic relief this, but not, for my money, the winner.

A moment later the jury announced that they had picked the two semi-finalists, numbers 2 and 3, the day-bed and the desert air lamp. And in another minute the audience was asked to give the deciding vote by clapping—the volume of clapping was recorded on a large illuminated disc above the stage. When No. 2's name was called the clapping brought the hand of the disc up to 4, but a second later tremendous applause pushed the mother of two children up to 8, and there she was, at twenty five past twelve, "Queen for a Day." They led her to the front of the stage, hung a red velvet and ermine cloak on her shoulders, put a diamond crown on her wispy fair hair and a sceptre in one hand and four dozen red roses in the other. And there she stood with the sceptre and the roses, awkwardly trying to mop the continuous tears which flowed down her face, while in front of her they paraded the things she had won.

The desert air lamp she would get of course; the latest model. And a full size refrigerator, and an electric mixer and about a hundredweight of tinned food. Four extremely pretty mannequins walked past her wearing the wardrobe she would be given; suits and dresses from a famous designer. She was told that after she had done her tour of Hollywood (in the Cadillac) she would be sent on a fortnight's trip to the mountains, with any friend she liked to take. Finally, the revolving stage was all set to bring on the *pièce de résistance*, the 16-foot cream-coloured trailer caravan fitted with kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, ready to hook on to any car. And revolve it would have done, except that they couldn't find the trailer at the last moment. It turned up, however, in the street outside. And all the time the Queen wept silently, even when they sat her on a throne, and put her crown straight to take her picture. Even in this city of quick money, and big money, such luck only comes once.

Outside in the street women were queuing for a show called "Heart's Desire," which starts at 1.30. You write your heart's desire on a numbered card and then . . .

Hollywood, May. LUCY MILNER

The Arts and Entertainment

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

The Beggar's Opera was a notion of genius—one of those myths that are created by a combination of local exasperation, human feeling, brilliant talk over the glasses, and a shared taste for *fou rire*. With all its air of improvisation, the text is as sharp and economical as a lancet: no matter how you dress it, the blade comes through as keen as ever. Nigel Playfair's light-hearted production went all out for charm, ignoring the misery implicit in the original; the Brecht-Weill *Dreigroschenoper* neglected Gay and Pepusch for the Tottenham Court Road of 1900, with echoes of Kipling and a top dressing of jazz to attract the audiences of 1927. Neither of these versions could have much appeal for us to-day, though both may well be revived a century hence. Of Professor E. J. Dent's score I cannot speak, not having heard it. Remains (among still others) Benjamin Britten's, which received its first performance at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, last week.

I shall expect Britten's "realisations" of the songs to meet with resistance in some quarters. It is not only that many people know and love their Frederick Austin too well to put up with so wholly different a treatment, but that even more people are apt to think of that version as in some obscure sense "traditional." Yet Austin's tactful and charming score is harmonically no nearer to the High Baroque style than Grieg's *Holberg Suite* or many another nineteenth-century pastiche. Britten has in fact stuck close to Pepusch's basses, and after only one hearing I can think of none of the tunes which did not move naturally and with ease among the eloquent images, the puns and astonishing hyperboles, of the orchestral accompaniment (brilliantly played). Although seldom angular and never out of style, the harmony is markedly individual and you may listen in vain for "perfect" cadences and the many other properties usually associated with tunes of this date. Those who have heard Britten's folk song arrangements will know what to expect. As in the best English cooking, the material tastes of itself and not of some sauce or other; yet it would be difficult to exaggerate the variety and ingenuity with which the dishes are dressed. Britten's wonderful musicianship is evident on every page of a score which has not a dull moment in it; but amid so much that is fresh and surprising, one cannot fail to notice that the unflagging quality of this entertainment arises from a texture which has all the air of being as continuous as that of a "through-composed" opera. As often as not the orchestra acts as a kind of ramp up which the speaking voices mount gradually into the air; the songs seldom come to a full close and sometimes end in a foreign key—which proves, a few minutes later, to be that of the next song. Benjamin Britten has included far more of the original numbers than Frederic Austin did, and has occasionally supplied passages of poetically appropriate melodrama which assist the continuity and throw the characters into relief.

Mr. Tyrone Guthrie's production stresses the sinister fantasy, the squalor and pathos, of the underworld which stretches unbroken from Dekker, through Hogarth, Cruickshank and *Oliver Twist*, to the minor black markets of to-day. Miss Tanya Moiseiwitsch's immense rag-and-bone shop makes a most imaginative setting, eminently suitable to the rudimentary changes of scene. Among a large cast the Lockit of Otokar Kraus was outstanding: a Scarpia of the slums. Peter Pears' admirable singing, the wit and gaiety of his acting, triumphed over some natural unsuitability to the part of Macheath (not to mention an unfortunate wig). As Polly, Miss Nancy Evans looked as pretty as can be and sang with touching sweetness. As her foil, Miss Rose Hill quite rightly played Lucy Lockit for the uncontrolled fury that is in the part; but she should resist a tendency to overdo it. As Mrs. Trapes, Miss Gladys Parr made the very most of her one great scene; and Miss Flora Nielsen's Mrs. Peachum had some admirable moments in the first scene. I should have liked to hear rather more of the words—especially in the songs; but the acoustics of the Arts Theatre are notoriously woolly, and the cast may be counted upon to improve in this respect, as they settle into their parts.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

RADIO NOTES

MR. DESMOND HAWKINS's production of the Cranbourne Chase number of *Country Magazine* last Sunday reminds me that this series is now in its seventh year of existence. It remains the most consistently accomplished piece of radio journalism we have, and its origins may be worth recalling; for they are relevant to the attempts, not wholly successful, that have been made in the past few months to communicate to us the reality of the economic crisis and the need for increased production. *Country Magazine* was first devised, by Mr. Francis Dillon, to meet a definite requirement; there was the call for more home-grown food, the agricultural worker had to be given, as it were, a good conceit of himself, and the townsman, the factory-dweller, had to be familiarised with his work. All this was done in the lightest possible manner; half a dozen country people talking round the microphone, introduced, gently chivvied, made to feel at home by an avuncular compère, and half way through it all a folk-song from the district which was being celebrated. The pattern remains the same to this day; one switches on knowing what to expect: the fruity Dorset voice of Mr. Ralph Wightman putting everyone at their ease (is there a more skilful broadcaster than Mr. Wightman?), the jokes good and bad, the laughter, the giggles of the post-mistress or the school-mistress, the chaffing of the indefatigable Mr. Collinson as he introduces yet another folk-song he has discovered; and almost invariably the result is charming. Certainly Mr. Hawkins's programme was. Part of the success of the series lies, of course, like that of all regular programmes that have endured, over long periods, whether *Itma, Twenty Questions* or *Have a Go!* in its appeal to what Freud called the repetition-compulsion in us, the simple expectancy of the stock-joke, the catch-phrase, the familiar situation. But more important than this, I believe, is the fact that the people who appear in *Country Magazine* are always presented as *individual human beings*, not as generic types, farmers, post-mistresses, millers, hedgers and so on; they are never merely representative, they are always themselves. This is as refreshing as it is becoming rare. Factory workers, for instance, are almost always presented either as representative, as though they are fully alive only when pulling down important levers, or in the mass, when giving voice in the horrible and horrifying applause which opens and closes *Workers' Playtime*. But then, factory workers have no such programme as *Country Magazine* devoted to them. A pity; for if they had, the rest of us might learn that the inhabitants of Dagenham, for instance, have not only beaten all records in the manufacture of cars and tractors but are also human.

Gradually the Third Programme is building up a repertoire of recordings of long poems, of precisely those poems, in fact, which in the old days one could not reasonably have expected to hear on the wireless. Last week, for instance, we had Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's selection of Meredith's *Modern Love*, finely read by Mr. Marius Goring. As it happens, it wasn't the first time one had heard *Modern Love* on the air, for one still has grateful memories of Mr. Day Lewis reading it in the Home Service some three or four years ago. In any case, Meredith, we are told, is "coming back." But how many of us know Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon*, which Mr. Stephen Murray read the other night? It is in just such instances that one finds the Third Programme so valuable. For, more than we realise, our tastes are conditioned by fashion. By knocking holes in the walls that fashion puts up between us and so much of the past, the Third Programme, and Mr. Patric Dickinson in particular, are doing us all a service.

Mr. Henry Moore's statues in the exhibition of sculpture at Battersea Park have had their share of attention on the air as elsewhere, but nothing I have read or heard on them has been so agreeable as Mr. Robert Melville's talk on Sunday evening. It was most sensitive and felicitous. Whether Mr. Melville interpreted Moore's work rightly I do not know; but he certainly gave an exquisite translation into words of the effect of those "solidified phantoms" on him.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE THEATRE

"Musical Chairs" at The Arts.

The Arts Theatre Club is at present the one place in London at which one can be certain—as certain as anything is certain in the theatrical world—of finding something worth seeing. The current production is a revival of *Musical Chairs*, and it is interesting to see this play again, for on the strength of it and *The Maitlands* Ronald MacKenzie, their author, has been lamented as one of the saddest casualties of the English theatre (he was killed in a motor car accident at the end of the 'thirties). How does the play look now? On the whole it confirms the original opinion. It is written extremely tautly and economically, with a construction quite as neat and compact as, say, the current American success *All My Sons*, which is being very highly praised as a piece of craftsmanship. But there one can positively see the wheels go round, (the too obvious and forced planting of the mother's attitude, or the improbable holding back of an important letter). *Musical Chairs*, no less soundly built, moves with a far more graceful ease and casualness and swings with the surest touch between comedy and tension. It is in its attitudes that it dates, but dates perhaps in a right sense. It represents its times. These are the post-Great War years, and it is the indefensible characters who are made to gain all our sympathy, the neurotic young man, the father who can't keep his hands off the servant, and the quite amoral American girl, while the "decent" people are given no sort of hearing; they are all made to look fools or prigs. There is a kind of sentimentality in reverse here, highly characteristic of the period; and sometimes the sentimental nail is driven too far in. The original production of this play was particularly memorable, and the present one hardly comes up to it. But Mr. Richard Bird, Mr. Laurence Payne, Miss Gabrielle Brune carried the play along sufficiently convincingly. Miss Lucille Steven, as the plain dumb half-sister, gave a most moving performance, and Mr. Sydney Tafler rattles splendidly as an American commercial agent.

Mr. Basil Dean has had the happy notion of bringing in four of the leading repertory companies to the St. James's for two weeks each. It so falls out that no notice in these columns will be in time to encourage the venture, so I think it worth mentioning that this week and next the Liverpool Repertory Company will be giving *The Cherry Orchard*.

T. C. WORSLEY

THE MOVIES

"Four Steps in the Clouds," and "The Cumberland Story," at the Curzon

"So Evil My Love," at the Plaza

"Nothing Sacred," at the Dominion and the New Victoria

"Hail the Conquering Hero," at the Royal (from Sunday).

Once again, how good! The fifth Italian film to reach London sustains the quality of its predecessors so that it grows difficult to imagine an Italian film less than good. While in film-making the skill rests in France, the impulse comes from Italy: a rough generalisation not meant to be too strictly taken. But impulse these Italian pieces most certainly have; and *Four Steps in the Clouds* comes out with the comedy that not even the tragic war themes were able to stifle. Here, all is pleasurable and light. A simple little story of a much-married commercial traveller setting out early one morning and pretending to be the husband of a girl whose pretty sad looks have caught his eye in the train; she has a baby on the way but no wedding ring,

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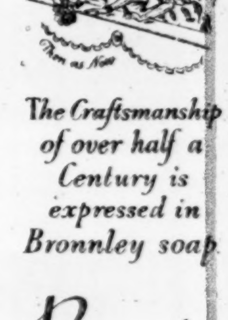

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they confront her family, there's a wedding feast, toasts are drunk, a bedroom is prepared; and having spent the night in the rickyard, with everything discovered and up to a point forgiven, he goes back home to his wife, whose voice receives him with the accents of the corncrake. It can be imagined how, in American or English hands, such a tale might be made intolerably farcical and arch; *Four Steps in the Clouds* keeps it plain, tearful, and funny. In the comic sequences an everyday incident is worked up, but worked up with a deliberate easy relish: the packed train and the lost tickets, for example, the bus drives round the square because its driver is about to become a father, the hairless old gentleman who is discovered after midnight playing a game of draughts with himself. Such scenes, played to the accompaniment of Italian gestures and a musical language, impart the *relaxation* which has all but disappeared with the so-called screen comedies of the moment. The innocent adventure itself is delightfully treated, with furious unwillingness on his part and abashed devotion on hers—two first-rate performances by Gino Cervi and Adriana Benetti. The director of this appealing trifle, is Alessandro Blasetti. In the same programme Jennings's *The Cumberland Story*, describes the reorganisation and development of under-sea mining in a distressed area. The material is thrilling, the treatment orthodox to a fault.

Miss Todd, who last week suffered from living on a barge and marrying a hangman, comes to grief this week through the fascinations of a blackmailing painter. *So Evil My Love* has a quite pretty background of Victorian London, but it can't be said that we are convinced by either Miss Todd in her progress from missionary's widow to poisoner or Mr. Milland as an "advanced" painter who never puts brush to canvas.

Among revivals I should like to distinguish two from the heyday of Hollywood comedy: *Nothing Sacred* remains one of the few satires that deal less than tenderly with vulgar boost, and in *Hail the Conquering Hero* Preston Sturges had the audacity to batter at American mother-love and hero-worship—two subjects even more sacred. He lands some blows and cracks some fun, but in mere noise this film is too uproarious for my ears. There is a useful if rather inconclusive survey of Sturges in the new and enlarged *Sequence*. The best of this Number Four, which maintains a lively intelligence, is its articles on French films.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT.

By an unfortunate printer's error in the Ballet notice last week, the role of Elihu, danced by Alexis Rassine, was attributed to Massine.

Correspondence

FORCED LABOUR IN RUSSIA

SIR,—Mr. Crankshaw's logic is as bad as his temper. It was he, not I, who recommended Mr. Dallin's book as "documented," "matter of-fact" and the like, and particularly as showing that corrective labour camps could not be "abolished quickly without ruining Soviet economy." When I expose the absurdity, not to say worse, of the statistics purporting to prove this assertion (not because I know all the answers, but because I set to work checking them from sources just as available to Mr. Crankshaw as to myself), he runs away from his "documentation" altogether, making nasty remarks over his shoulder.

He now takes refuge in the stories by certain (not "countless") Polish officers—persons soaked in anti-Soviet propaganda of the vilest kind for years before the war, and unlikely to hesitate about it now that they have lost their class privileges, and when so many others are busy making up for enforced self-restraint from 1941 to 1945. Of course their stories, reproduced by Mr. Dallin, are full of glaring absurdities—just as was the first half of Mr. Crankshaw's article on Soviet History. I can assure "A Foreigner" that my guns were very far from being all in action. But I concentrated on the main points selected by Mr. Crankshaw himself.

Unlike "A Foreigner," he won't completely desert Mr. Dallin, but begins to wriggle about Soviet economy. At first it was going to be "ruined" without the camps: now they are only "an integral part" of it. What does "integral" mean? Of course the corrective work done by prisoners in the U.S.S.R.—e.g., building roads, digging canals, carrying out river improvement and land drainage schemes—has economic importance: so have the tailoring, bootmaking, brushmaking and mailbag-sewing done in British jails ("A Foreigner" evidently doesn't know that forced labour exists in this country, and chain gangs as well in the U.S.A.). But that isn't to say it is *essential*, which is what Mr. Crankshaw suggested at first. And really he oughtn't to trust himself with figures: Soviet economy in 1940 had over 31 million wage workers, and well over 75 million collective farmers (with their families), yet Mr. Crankshaw tells us that it doesn't matter whether there are 2 or 20 million prisoners (or 200,000 either, presumably)—since "forced labour . . . has plainly become an integral part of Soviet economy." Plainly to whom? To Mr. Crankshaw's intuition.

Why are corrective labour camps necessary at all, asks "A Foreigner"? Because the building of a Socialist society in thirty years hasn't yet eradicated the heritage of many centuries of tribal, feudal and capitalist society, in which man to man was wolf; because there are still thieves, burglars, embezzlers, swindlers, murderers, hooligans and loafers in the U.S.S.R.—as well as some who were dispossessed by Socialism, and still don't like it. And because the most humane and practical way of treating such people is to set them to useful work (in lesser cases, at their jobs or in settlements; in major cases, in more remote penal camps) and thus re-educate them. "A Foreigner" can find the true picture of their conditions if he wants it, in the English translation of the *White Sea Canal*. That conditions in the camps are "appalling" is flatly in contradiction to common sense, in a country so constantly short of labour, and so dependent as the Soviet Union visibly is (for the real "close student") on the maximum initiative of free workmen, for the success of its economy.

Mr. Hardie asks me how many prisoners there are. I don't know. If I did, it wouldn't make any difference to the propaganda of the type this correspondence is about. It has been in full swing ever since 1917—even when these particulars were published annually in the Soviet *Statistical Year Book* (e.g., up to 1929). But I must draw attention to Mr. Crankshaw's argument that, because the Soviet Government doesn't choose at present to publish statistics, its critics have the moral right to use "reasoned approximations" like those of Mr. Dallin—irrespective of whether they stand the most elementary reasoned investigation: i.e., that no holds are barred where the U.S.S.R. is concerned. As a frank expression of the real anti-Soviet "mentality" (not my word), that is hard to beat.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

39 Hillway, N.6.

SIR,—Mr. Rothstein is so eager to discredit Mr. Dallin that he has allowed himself some freedom with his references. He says, for instance, that "Dallin's guesswork about alleged slaves . . . ranges, not between 8 and 15 millions, but between 5 and 35 millions (pp. 86–87)—a variety of estimates which shows their utter irresponsibility." The casual reader might suppose from this that an estimate of 5–35 millions emanating from Mr. Dallin himself was to be found on either page 86 or 87. Para 3 on page 86 gives the author's own estimate of 7–12 millions made some years ago; para 4 gives a German estimate of 1940 of 9,600,000; para 5 gives an estimate emanating from Professor Sergei Prokopovich of 5–7 millions; and on page 87 Mr. Dallin adjusts his earlier estimate to current conditions and suggests a figure of 10–12 millions. On pages 84 and 85 Mr. Dallin summarises some of the wilder estimates, characterising

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AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE & ELECTRIC

EXPANSION OF PROFIT

THE twenty-eighth ordinary general meeting of the Automatic Telephone and Electric Co., Ltd., will be held at Liverpool on June 24.

The following is an extract from the statement by the chairman, Sir Alexander Roger, K.C.I.E., circulated with the report for the year 1947:—

The trading profit and other income total £843,222 against £456,942 in 1946. This considerable rise is partly due to expansion of factory activity and partly to price adjustments, some of which still remain provisional.

At the end of the year orders in hand represented a peak in the company's history although our principal customer, the Post Office, has reduced its orders to a minimum to meet the Government's cut in capital expenditure and to facilitate exports.

It is gratifying to report that at January 1, 1948, orders from overseas represented slightly more than half the value of our total orders in hand. It is encouraging to know that the Government, with the support of the Trade Unions, has taken steps to stabilise costs and thus attract export customers who want reasonable price protection if their orders are to come to England.

Efficiency of industry in this country is not being helped by the severe curtailment in capital expenditure, particularly at a time when war-time arrears need to be overtaken. I feel that we are only putting off the evil day when we shall have to face the tremendous expenditure which will be required if we are to retain our place as an industrial and exporting nation.

FRIENDS' PROVIDENT AND CENTURY INSURANCE OFFICES

The annual general meeting of the Friends' Provident and Century Life Office was held on June 2 in London. The Chairman (Mr. Herbert G. Tanner, J.P.) said: The year 1947 has, once again, shown record growth in all departments. In the life department the new sums assured amounted to £7,015,569, an increase of 77 per cent. over the preceding year. Further very satisfactory progress has been made in the continuous disability department.

In the fire department net premiums for our group of companies exceeded £1,382,000, an increase of 30 per cent. on the preceding year.

The total premium income for our home and foreign accident business is more than £180,000 above the corresponding total for 1946.

The premium income in the marine account has increased by £190,000 to a total of £706,132, and we are able to transfer £54,487 to profit and loss account.

With regard to our investments, despite a rise during 1947 in the yield on British Government securities by about ¼ per cent. and some consequent improvement in yield on other securities, the return obtainable on new investments was such that we consider it very satisfactory that the gross rate of interest earned on the Friends' Provident Funds was, at £5 3s 3d. per cent., very little below the rate of £5 4s. 7d. per cent. for 1946.

The total profits of The Century, including interest and after deducting expenses, but not income-tax, were £182,860. A dividend of £150,000 has been declared (the same as the previous year) and a balance of £426,048 has been carried forward.

The report was adopted.

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them as guesses, and warning the reader that they are highly exaggerated, giving them merely as indications that knowledge of imprisonment on a huge scale is widespread within Russia itself. In this section the following passage is quoted from a Polish book; it is the only place where the figure 35,000,000 occurs:

> Polish prisoners, deported to Russia in 1939 and later, were told by the prison guards who were boasting of Russia's power and bigness—Poland has scarcely 35 million inhabitants; in our country, we have that many prisoners alone!

Mr. Rothstein may like to pretend for his purposes that this typical emigré joke is put forward by Mr. Dallin as a serious estimate of his own, but few people will follow him.

Mr. Rothstein makes much of Professor Lorimer's neat conjuring trick, which can be summarised as follows: Dallin says there were 10–12 million prisoners in 1940, that 85–90 per cent. of them were adult males, and that 30–40 per cent. of them die each year; then since the adult male population was 46.7 millions in 1940, the Soviet adult male population has already ceased to exist, which is absurd, therefore Dallin is worthless. Mr. Rothstein announces the conjuring trick with one of his neat little brackets—"These figures," he says, "(pp. 72, 84–87, 141,) suggest . . ." But wait a minute, page 72 is given over to a list of camps, with comments on their special features, not with any general statements. Surely there is some mistake . . .? But no! Here we are!

> Several camps are known for *particularly bad living conditions* . . . two *punitive camps* (*for special punishment of prisoners from other camps*) are known to exist in the Far East—*one* on the Kolyma River, *the other* on the lower Yenisei near its estuary on the Arctic Ocean. The mortality rate *there* is reported to exceed 0 per cent per year.

This suggests to me, and may suggest to other readers, that Mr. Dallin is speaking of the unusually high death rate at one of two notoriously bad camps. I do not see how the passage can be read, in good faith, as a statement that the general death rate in Russian prisons is from 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. Such a reading is, of course, crucial to the argument taken from Professor Lorimer by Mr. Rothstein.

After rehashing Professor Lorimer, Mr. Rothstein goes on to be funny about a calculation said to have been founded by Mr. Dallin on a list "mainly based on the letter heads of camps" "compiled in 1940 by a group of Polish Officers in Italy." The list is in fact taken from a book called *La Justice Sovietique* published in Rome in 1945 and written by two Polish officers, Mora and Zwierniak, who served with the Allied Forces. Presumably Mr. Rothstein dates the list 1940 in order to suggest that Mr. Dallin is using an Italian Fascist source. It does not rest on the evidence named by him, but was drawn up after examination of the testimony of thousands of Poles serving with our forces in the Middle East, North Africa, and Italy after their release from Russian prisons by the Sikorski amnesty: the "letter heads" are portions of documents relating to their movements in Russia offered in support of their statements. The calculation of the numbers imprisoned in the named camps, on the basis of each name being that of a cluster of twenty "regions," each region containing ten camps, does not emanate from Mr. Dallin but is quoted by him verbatim from Mora and Zwierniak. They do not, as Mr. Rothstein suggests, offer it without a shred of evidence but they conclude from the testimony they have examined that Russian camp organisation follows that pattern. Poles who were in Bezymenlag, for example, say that it was so organised, and that it held between 250,000 to 300,000 prisoners in all: if Mr. Rothstein has better evidence to offer, let him offer it; his assertions by themselves have no value whatever.

The calculation is supported incidentally by the report of the case of some groups of Spanish Republicans recently printed in *Tribune*. They are at the camp numbered 23 on the Polish list called Karlag, or Karaganda, and the official title of the camp where they are held is 99/22, Spassk, which suggests that it is either the 99th section of the 22nd element in a series or the other way about. Since 99/32, Spassk, contains about 900 people, Karlag is obviously a very big affair: Mr. Dallin allots it 150,000 internees. It is interesting, too, to see that the Spaniards in question have been reduced in number from 122 to 59 since 1941.

I cannot feel that Mr. Rothstein has shown that Mr. Dallin is untrustworthy: the boot appears to be on the other foot since not a single statement of his about Mr. Dallin's book stands scrutiny.

ANTHONY WEST

The Old Rectory, Tarrant Hinton,
Blandford, Dorset.

TRUMAN, BEVIN AND GLUBB

SIR,—May I make the following comments on the leading article in your last issue.

(1) According to the 1946 Army List, Major J. G. Glubb (Commander of the Arab League) was a member of the Royal Regular Reserve and presumably therefore in receipt of reserve pay and subject to the directions of the Crown in certain respects. It is difficult to imagine that this officer did not play an important part (and moreover with the approval of H.M. Government) in the direction of Arab operations and the co-ordination of the various Arab states in their offensive against Israel and Uno.

(2) There was posted up in February at a R.E.M.E. Training Centre in England a British Army Order calling for Majors, Captains, Armourers, Machinists, and Electricians and other branches for servicing mechanical equipment and transport, to volunteer for service in the "Arab League." When the question was raised in the Commons, it was explained that this was a typographical error for "Arab Legion." After making the most generous possible allowance for even War Office slovenliness this seems doubtful, but be this as it may, it is relevant to ascertain particulars of the men who volunteered, and where they are now posted. They should be withdrawn out of hand.

Broad Street House, **HORACE B. SAMUEL**
E.C.2.

SOVIET DIPLOMACY

SIR,—Your readers will doubtless be amused by the statement by Prof. Namier in your issue of May 29, ". . . I do not believe that after Prague this country would have entered a coalition with Hitler . . ." What are the established facts?

(1). There is the evidence of Chamberlain's ambassador, Henderson, speaking to Hitler five months *after* Prague, five days after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of non-aggression, precisely 75 hours before Hitler invaded Poland—just before midnight on August 28:

> Hitler asked whether England would be willing to accept an alliance with Germany. I said, speaking personally, I did not exclude such a possibility provided the development of events justified it. . . (p. 279, Maisky, *Ten Years Ambassador*).

(2). Before the Chamberlain military mission was countering Moscow's offer on August 15, 1939, of 136 divisions, 5,000 guns, 5,000 aircraft and 10,000 whippets and tanks with a suggestion that Britain would send five infantry divisions and one mechanised division, discussions went on in London in June between Robert Hudson and/or Sir Horace Wilson (Chamberlain's close adviser) and Wohltat (Hitler's economic adviser). According to Hudson's admission in London at the time (p. 271, Maisky), there was to be a loan, generally described as of £1,000,000,000.

Moreover, according to the documents captured in Berlin and just published in Moscow, Dirksen, German ambassador in London, declared in a dispatch on July 21, 1939, concerning the British secret talks on military, economic and political issues with Wohltat, that, if the pacts were signed, Britain would withdraw the recently signed guarantee to Poland. Or, as Dirksen commented, "Poland would be left, so to speak, alone, face to face with Germany."

GEORGE BILAINKIN

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THE NEWSPRINT SHORTAGE

The annual general meeting of The Daily News Limited was held on May 26 in London.

Mr. L. J. CADBURY (the chairman), in the course of his speech, said: The securing of its newsprint supplies overshadows every other problem before the British Press. We are operating on a lower percentage of our pre-war consumption than the newspapers of any other country in the world, excepting Japan and Hungary. Our papers on their standard basis of four pages are almost the smallest in the world, and probably the only newspapers in the world that remain at their lowest war-time size.

The time has come when the relative priority of newsprint and pulp among Britain's necessary imports should be reconsidered, so that the long-term plans for the gradual enlargement of the newspapers and the unfreezing of their sales can be restored. The question of a rearrangement of priorities is entirely in the hands of the Government.

It is sometimes suggested that the newsprint shortage is deliberately designed to oppress the Opposition and prevent them from putting their case to the country. This theory, however, ignores the fact that the newspapers of the Left suffer equally with the newspapers of the Right.

But one is certainly not reassured about the readiness of the Government to play fair with the Press on reading such intemperate attacks as those made recently by Mr. Aneurin Bevan, or the sweeping allegations of inaccuracy made by Mr. G. S. Lindgren. It suggests the attitude of some members of the Government to the Press may be that:

"Thou shalt not kill, but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive."

By way of contrast to these exhibitions of hostility it is encouraging when important persons voice their appreciation of British newspapers and journalists. Mr. McNeil, for example, told the World Conference on Freedom of Information at Geneva that: "There may be imperfections in the British Press, but it is as free and vigorous as any other Press represented at this Conference." I have had the honour this year to be Chairman of the Newspaper Press Fund and presided at their annual dinner a short time ago. Our principal guest was Mr. Justice Birkett. In the course of his remarks he said "I cannot but deplore that a great instrument like the Press, of such immense value not merely in our national but in our international affairs should be hampered because they lack the space to report those matters which it is so vitally important should be known."

It is sometimes argued that the Press wastes its newsprint on sport and what some austere critics may call frivolous news. It is true both have their share of the small space available. And why should this not be so?

"Humani nil a me alienum puto."

It is a function of the Press to mirror all aspects of life and to entertain all classes of the community as well as provide them with information and instruction.

In the House of Commons debate that has just taken place the President of the Board of Trade adopted an attitude on the newspaper situation that appears to modify the severity of the recent letter from Sir Stafford Cripps.

If supplies of paper are to be secured the Government will have to recognize that Canadian newsprint has a permanent and integral part in the British supply system.

The report was adopted.

The fable of the restive horse

There was once a Horse who frisked and capered, side-stepped, frolicked or loitered as the fancy took him, 'Why not?' quoth he, 'so long as I've a bagful of oats and the sun shines down.' Just then from a nearby wood came the howl of wolves. 'Nay now,' cried the Horse, as he sprang forward, 'it shall never be said that I couldn't take a hint.'

As a nation slow starters, once the race is on we show both speed and endurance. TI have as much faith in Britain's power to outstrip economic calamity as they have in their own manufactures. The one is expressed in the other, for thousands of people abroad have reason to think of Britain in terms of steel tubes, electric equipment, bicycles, alloys or paint from TI.

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AGRICULTURAL POLICY

SIR,—The statistics quoted by Mr. Bateson to prove a reduced output per worker in British agriculture can, like all statistics, be very misleading unless their limitations are understood. I believe the figures he quotes refer to something called "productive man work units," a very different thing from "physical output" or "value of output" per worker. For example, P.M.W.Us. make no allowance for changes in output per productive unit, nor for changes in quality of output. Further, I understand poultry are omitted from the calculations, while no allowance is made for maintenance work, for shorter working hours per week, nor for the abnormal effort required to break up marginal and submarginal land. Again, no adjustment is made for the extensive use of unskilled labour during these recent years, a factor which must have exerted a substantially depressing effect on average output per worker, however calculated.

If Mr. Bateson had quoted from this series of statistics for earlier years, he could have shown that P.M.W.U. per worker increased 34 per cent. between 1921 and 1940, in England and Wales. Can any other primary industry in the country claim an equal or greater achievement?

One gets the impression that Mr. Bateson would write more convincingly if he possessed a more thorough knowledge of practical conditions. His claim that "the economic function of the domestic food producer is to produce those foods only that it would be more expensive to import" is no more than specious. His reference to "the tyranny of the boss's eye" as an argument in favour of State farming, is merely silly.

R. McG. Carslaw

Henhill, Forteviot, Perthshire.

[Mr. Bateson writes: "Dr. Carslaw's reservations do not dispose of the unflattering implications of Professor Ashby's figures. Even if the margin of error is as much as 10 per cent. (it is most unlikely to be more), it is still clear that the average British agriculturist is not working anything like as hard as before the war. The inter-wars achievement, to which Dr. Carslaw refers, only clinches my point that the present guaranteed prices tend to be a disincentive. Finally, I did not, of course, expect so rugged an individualist to see eye to eye with me on what constitutes tyranny—or silliness."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

CIVIL LIBERTIES

SIR,—I greatly appreciate the courtesy and kindness with which Mr. L. C. White, the chairman of the executive, refers to my resignation from the N.C.C.L.

I do not recall the full details of the case of Major Vernon, to which Mr. White refers, but it was at all events a case. The Council then acted on behalf of a particular individual, and after the investigation of certain facts concerning him. Members were not, I think, invited to generalise, as they were at the recent annual meeting. At that meeting they were asked not to pronounce on a case, but to censure the Government's prospective ban on Communists before they knew or could know the cases in which the ban would be applied. Communists themselves might very properly propose such a vote of censure, but it seemed to me inadmissible in the agenda of a non-party body, so I reluctantly resigned.

Reform Club, S.W.1. E. M. Forster

SCARBOROUGH

SIR,—In the excellent report by Woodrow Wyatt of the Labour Party Conference, he writes of me that I "went too far and qualified for the charge . . . of being a member of the Housewives League."

May I point out that I have a letter of apology from one of the two speakers who made this charge. He says: "You were a courageous woman; you stated your beliefs, and to a certain extent they are mine, and I do hope that the insult you have received will not weaken your faith. Again I say I am sorry that I stooped so low."

I stand eight hours a day in a shop in the Labour borough of Tottenham and listen to the women (at the last municipal election they returned a Tory), and I am continually defending the Government, and explaining its actions, in my small way.

The reason I raised this issue is because I wanted the Government to act in such a way that it becomes apparent to the workers that *they* benefit under a Labour Government. Their experience (and that is what they judge by) doesn't bear it out. At Scarborough we were given the list of legislation the Government has passed—a very fine list—but I'm afraid little of it affects the worker in his daily life.

I really want to see the Government returned to power, and shall do my best in that direction; but I hope the Government in its last two years will bring in some legislation which will ease the burden of the workers so that it is plain to them.

Incidentally I did not say the "workers were worse off." I said the workers were saying it—a much more dangerous position.

Hilda Lane

30 Chamberlain House,
Phœnix Road, N.W.1.

COLOUR BAR

SIR,—The recent decision of the United States Supreme Court declaring restrictive covenants prohibiting the letting of houses to Negroes and others to be legal but unenforceable at law, commented upon by Critic in "London Diary", prompts inquiry as to the existence of a colour bar on similar lines in this country. In an agreement for tenancy of a London flat I found a clause forbidding the tenant "to assign underlet or part with possession of the demised premises or any part thereof either furnished or unfurnished for all or any part of the term hereby granted to a person of colour." It would be interesting to know what attitude the English Courts would take on an attempt to enforce forfeiture of the tenancy for breach of this clause.

John Thacker

16 St. Johns Park Mansions, N.19.

CROMWELLIAN CAPITALISM.

SIR,—In his review of W. C. Abbott's *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell, Vol. IV,* Mr. Trevor Roper speaks of "The Marxist denouncing him [Cromwell] as the creature of monopoly capitalism." To anyone who knows anything of Marxism this is self-evident nonsense, for no Marxist, so far as I am aware, has ever dated the epoch of monopoly capitalism earlier than the last quarter of the nineteenth century. What Mr. Trevor-Roper possibly meant to controvert was the Marxist view that the English seventeenth-century revolution was a revolution of the same type as the French Revolution of 1789 (and here the author of the book he was reviewing—no Marxist—would agree), a revolution of which the driving force and main beneficiary was the urban and rural bourgeoisie.

Oxford. Christopher Hill

TIGER BAY

SIR,—By an unpardonable oversight I used the word "Negro" as equivalent to "non-White" in my letter published on May 29th. This might be inferred from my later use of the words White and non-White, but perhaps I should state explicitly that in the thirty per cent. non-White in the Loudoun Square area and the ten per cent. farther south I included Negroes, Arabs, Somalis and the other peoples mentioned by Dr. Little. The discrepancy with his figures (eighty per cent. and thirty-three per cent.), therefore, does not arise from a difference in the definition of "White."

Harriett Wilson

Ty-Fry, Pendoylan, Glamorgan.

SWISS HOLIDAYS

SIR,—Mr. A. J. Benson, who writes from Oxford in your issue of May 22nd, may be interested to know that a £10 "Go-as-you-Please" holiday in Switzerland is perfectly possible through the Youth Hostels Association. An allocation of Swiss currency is available for students and others aged under twenty-five.

Graham Heath,
International Officer
Youth Hostels Association.

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JONATHAN CAPE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE two Chambers, William and Robert, were a remarkable pair. They began as boys by selling their schoolbooks and old Bibles on a barrow in Leith Street, and ended as great powers in Edinburgh, publishers, editors of *Chambers' Journal*, authors of numerous works. Above all, they were compilers of miscellanies, and in that way Robert Chambers' *Domestic Annals* is masterly. It is a diary of Scottish life, arranged in date order from the reign of Mary Queen of Scots to the Forty-Five. Chambers quotes contemporary writings and such State documents as survived the depredations of Oliver Cromwell. The book excludes high politics, except as they impinge upon the condition of the people. It might be called an early example of the economic conception of history. But as it was published in 1859, it escaped the grinding conscientious dullness of history written under the Marxian influence. It creates a lively picture of a nation which reproduced in little the civilisation of its time, modified by its remoteness on the far edge of Europe.

The part covering the reign of James VI, before he came to the English throne, is interesting because it is unfamiliar. After Mary fled to be imprisoned by her cousin, Scotland was left to the minority to which she was bitterly accustomed; with the boy king in Stirling Castle learning from George Buchanan along with sound Latinity that his mother was a murderess and an adulteress, while the Regents in series fought with the Queen's party for control of his person and the Government, and the country was devastated by their wars and the English invasions.

Within that turbulent frame, the first impression is of the prevalence of the nobles. Lairds in the Lowlands, the medieval hangover, feudalism in full decay. Chiefs in the Highlands with the absolute claim to loyalty of a far more ancient system. Scotland was unlucky, she never had a War of the Roses to wipe out this pest. There was the Government over which to fight, there were innumerable personal and family vendettas, and there were the benefices of the Church to grab and intrigue for. Mary the Catholic and the Protestants Regents alike used them to buy supporters; and most of the nobles were for sale, as they were a set of finished and perfect cads, as false as they were brutal. The behaviour of the Earl of Cassilis, called the "King of Carrick," was indeed enough to shock even his fellows. He wanted a lease of Crossraguel Abbey, held by a Commendator, Stewart, who refused it. The Earl took him to a "feast" in the Black Voute of Dunure Castle.

> He commandit his cooks to prepare the banquet. And so first they flayit the sheep, that is they took off the Abbot's claithes, even to his skin; and next they band him to the chimney, his legs to the one end and his arms to the other; and so they began to beet the fire, sometimes to his buttocks, sometimes to his legs, sometimes to his shoulders and arms. And that the roast should not burn, but that it might roast in sop, they spared not flamming with oil.

The wretch survived the torture, but when he appealed to the Privy Council for redress, it was incapable of coping with the Kennedy power in Ayrshire. That was in 1570.

The nobles were mostly at feud with their nearest neighbours. This baronial anarchy was slightly abated by alliances called "bonds of manred," such as that made in 1573 by the Earls of Eglintoun and Glencairn with others, who vowed:

> The Holy Evangel touched, to take true, faithful, plain and aefauld (single) part all together in all actions, causes, quarrels, controversies and debates against all persons whatsomever, the king's majesty alone excepted.

They were to share their castles, and to arbitrate disputes among themselves. Quite the modern idea.

Enmity apart, whole tribes lived by thieving. Macgregors on the Highland Line, and Scotts, Elliots, and Armstrongs on the Borders were professional cattle lifters. The Regent Moray had a special grudge against the Elliots. They were a wild crew; a ballad by Maitland of Lethington details their ways:

They thieves that steals and turses hame
Ilk ane of them has ane to-name
Will of the Laws
Hab of the Shaws
To mak bare wa's
They think no shame.

The Regent went to war with them in 1567, hanging some and meaning to extirpate the brood.

The religious annals present some peculiarities. Beneath the greed of the lairds, the common people were being considerably civilised by the reformed church, though many a parish was without a minister, and large regions remained Catholic. That fact, and, to do them justice, the belief of the Calvinist leaders in the individual conscience, resulted in a rare degree of tolerance. After the Reformation there was no more killing of dissidents in Scotland save in one case—a contrast to Elizabeth's England, let alone to the Catholic burnings on the Continent. Naturally, the forbidden Mass was celebrated in secret; but when priests were caught they were pilloried, not destroyed. The heads of the great Catholic houses like the Gordons were excommunicated. Not that excommunication by a heretic Kirk would worry a Catholic, but the sentence carried the loss of some civil rights. Relative toleration, combined with the real religious democracy which interested the people in doctrine and church government alike, sorted well with the old fanatical love of freedom. The new religion gave them exercise for their new learning. Knox's determination that every child should go to school had some success, in the Lowlands at least; and a scene of 1582 holds the result in a nutshell. Andrew Melville visited the aged George Buchanan.

> When we came to his chalmer we fand him sitting in his chair, teaching his young man that servit in his chalmer to spell; a b ab, e b eb, etc. After salutation Mr. Andrew says, "I see, sir, that you are not idle." "Better this," quoth he, "nor stealing sheep."

No tolerance was given to the sin of witchcraft, which was far more severely punished than murder. The witchcraft trials were another of the matters in which Scotland repeated the experience of the Continent somewhat late; indeed, the great persecutions by the Catholic Church belonged to a past century. Yet it is clear from the spells that the craft dated back behind the Reformation. Consider a charm for the healing of sores and gunshot wounds:

"Thir sores are risen through God's wark,
And must be laid through God's help;
The Mother Mary, and her dear Son,
Lay thir sores that are begun."

The next has not the same plain Catholic note. But I quote it because, as an ancient charm of bonesetters, it ought to be carved on the portal of the College of Osteopathy:

Our Lord forth raide
His foal's foot slade
Our Lord down lighted
His foal's foot righted
Saying; "Flesh to flesh, blood to blood, and bane
to bane,
In our Lord His Name."

The Scottish judges held White Magic, like that of those helpful charms, to be as damning as Black Magic, which was frequently mixed with murder. Thus Thomas Lees of Aberdeen was burned merely because he was one of a large company of witches and sorcerers who had gone to the Fish Cross on Hallowe'en and danced in the form of hares and cats a long space of time. Bessie Dunlop of Ayrshire was burned because she was a "finder"; possessing an uncommon but known sort of second-sight, in which a person who has lost something tells the finder, who remembers where the lost object lies.

Black magic was rife enough. In 1590 there was the astonishing case of the Munros of Foulis. Lady Foulis had designs on her stepson; she summoned witches from far and near, who strove to destroy him by shooting elf-arrows at his image in butter, and then tried to poison him. Hector Munro in return plotted [illegible] son George, and consulted a noto[illegible] She dug a grave near the sea-flood and [illegible] the dead of night and in silence, said the charge:

> She and certain of your servants put you in a pair of blankets and carried you forth to the same grave. You was laid in the said grave, and the green earth which was cuttit was laid aboon, and holden down with staves, the witch being beside you. Christian Neill, your fostermother was commanded to run the breadth of nine rigs, and in her hand Neill the younger. And how soon Christian had run the breadth she came again to the grave, and inquirit at the said witch "Whilk was her choice?" Wha answered and said that Mr. Hector was her choice to live and your brother George to die for you. And this form was used thrice that night.

George accordingly took ill and died. Neither Lady Foulis nor Hector Munro, tried in succession before juries composed entirely of their clan kin, was condemned; but a couple of the witches concerned were burned.

What with witches and fairies, still universally believed in and often seen, the people had the distractions of fancy. They needed them, for their material life was rough and poor. "Dearth," say the Annals, of about one year in three. "Dearth and many dead of famine."

Yet for all the darkness of famine, plague and war, the picture is not all gloomy. The people were advancing in the crafts. The masons might be chiefly employed in building the castles which are found in Scotland in such extraordinary numbers. But they built well; the "Scots Baronial" houses are often beautiful, and on occasion are magnificent, like Cragievar. Decoration was coming into vogue. It was the same Stuart Earl of Bothwell who danced with witches in North Berwick churchyard, who raised the storms to prevent Anne of Denmark from setting sail for Scotland, who got workmen to carve Crichton Castle with delicate bas-relief.

And the whole country was a nest of singing-birds. No war nor hunger could stop the Scots from their inveterate passions for dance and song. Every event was turned into poetry as soon as it occurred; for this was the golden age of the ballad. Did Adam Gordon, Huntly's brother, burn Towie Castle with Lady Forbes and her children in it? The tale was immortal in the ballad *Edom of Gordon*. Did Scott of Branxholm snatch his man Kinmont Willie from Carlisle Castle in 1596? The ballad rings like horses' hoof-beats.

Indeed, the Renaissance came to Scotland late but lovely, like her own springtime. Drummond of Hawthornden would write love-sonnets honied as those of Sidney. John Napier of Merchiston, after twenty years of thought, was about to publish his invention of logarithms. Meantime, the danger of Spanish invasion moved him to devise burning-glasses to set ships on fire, a ranging shot capable of killing whole enemy armies (but this was too cruel, and he destroyed the directions),

> a closed and fortified carriage to bring harquebussiers into the midst of the enemy, besides devices of sailing under the water.

Machine-guns, tanks and submarines, in fact. Napier was the protagonist of that inventive genius which the modern learning was to uncover in Scotland.

It was to go down, the song and dancing, fairy-tale and ghost story, into the cold blackness of the industrial age. Yet it lasted a long time, in little Northern Scotland, the fierce and brilliant life, greedy and brave, straitened and passionate. There is a tombstone in Melrose Abbey churchyard which writes its whole epitaph, though it was engraved much later, for it bears the date 1761:

The Earth goeth on the Earth
Glistring like Gold
The Earth goes to the Earth
Sooner than it wold.
The Earth builds on the Earth
Castles and Towers
The Earth says to the Earth
All shall be ours.

FREDA WHITE

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A VENERABLE ART

Fakes. A Handbook for Collectors and Students. By Otto Kurz. *Faber.* 30s.

Despite its subtitle this is a book that will interest and amuse the general reader. It deals with fakes of paintings, drawings, prints, mosaics, sculpture, furniture, tapestries, ceramics, goldsmith's work and bookbinding. It explains the methods by which such springes are produced, are "planted," and are detected. It describes hundreds of fakes, some of them celebrated, that have come into collections public and private; and it is illustrated with 95 photographs. A scholarly record, displaying the fraudulent and the credulous in a sort of symbiosis.

Faking is an art venerable in its antiquity: wherever man has been civilised enough to prize objects for their outstanding beauty, these have been imitated. The Romans forged Greek statues; so did the Renaissance Italians; and Dr. Kurz quotes from a thirteenth-century Chinese scholar a passage explaining in detail how to detect by their patina sham-antique bronzes. Every great museum possesses works known to be fakes, among the most celebrated being the Leonardo *Flora* in Berlin, the Etruscan sarcophagus in the British Museum, and the tiara of Saitaphernes in the Louvre. (Dr. Kurz takes for granted also that the Greek "Throne" in Boston is an imposture, but whether it is remains most uncertain.) Such fakes can have considerable artistic merit. The Victoria and Albert Museum very properly exhibits the works of Bastianini as fine examples of nineteenth-century sculpture. (His contemporary, Dossena, was only an exquisite craftsman.) The best murders are those which never incur any suspicion. The same would be true of the best fakes, but undiscovered fakes are much less common, I suspect, than undiscovered murders.

The advance of scholarship, and the use of X-rays and chemical analysis, have made the forger's work more arduous; but his knowledge has kept pace with that of his enemy. Some of the most successful fakes to-day are imitations of work by artists only recently dead or even still alive. The living, one might suppose, could be trusted to decide upon the authenticity of works attributed to them. But writers certainly cannot always remember whether they wrote some small article. Is the painter's memory more trustworthy? And if he does remember, will he always admit paternity? Soutine, for instance, disliked his early paintings, and bought them, whenever he could, in order to destroy them.

Fakes are not always intentional. Some good artists—Alfred Stevens, for instance—find an ancient style congenial; and their archaistic works may be sold as antiques by a dealer. Even when the artist intends to deceive, his motives need not be chiefly mercenary: he may be able to gain applause for his work only by passing it off as the work of another.

The success with which the greatest experts have on occasion been imposed upon is highly gratifying to the Philistines. Unable themselves to enjoy works of art, they prefer to fancy that those who do enjoy them are either deceitful or self-deceived: and they suppose that they have proved their point when a prized Leonardo turns out to be the work of a forgotten Victorian (whose *œuvre* can best be studied, I believe, in the public park at Southampton). The truth is that a fake can afford genuine pleasure in so far as it reflects the vision of a great artist. Almost all men of genius, whether painters, writers or musicians produce a mass of journeyman-work lacking the intensity that distinguishes their masterpieces. We can often, however, enjoy such work, because the style is associated in our minds with that of the masterpieces. For this reason a modern composer can produce a fugue which may be mistaken for Bach. What he cannot produce is a work that will enrich or enlarge our notion of Bach.

Then there is the matter of scale. Several contributors to the Week-End Competitions in this journal can turn out a few lines so beautifully imitated from Shakespeare or Milton or Wordsworth that nobody could, on merely internal evidence, disprove their authenticity. But it would be utterly impossible to fabricate a whole play supposedly by Shakespeare, a whole book supposedly from *Paradise Lost* or *The Prelude,* by which scholars would be deceived. In the same way a faker can successfully forge one picture or statue, but a whole roomful of his works would at once be recognised as bogus.

An interesting point is made by Friedlander in a passage quoted by Dr. Kurz:

> Since every epoch acquires fresh eyes, Donatello in 1930 looks different from what he did in 1870. That which is worthy of imitation appears different to every generation. Hence, whoever in 1870 successfully produced works by Donatello, will find his performance no longer passing muster with the experts in 1930. We laugh at the mistakes of our fathers, as our descendants will laugh at us.

Dr. Kurz gives some useful warnings about Minoan art, our notions of which are apt to be coloured not so much by fakes as by over-enthusiastic restorations. He does not mention the great Glozel hoax, presumably because the objects hardly pretended to be works of art. Nor does he throw any light on the Van Meegeren forgeries of Vermeer, of which I long to read a detailed account. (In the poor photographs I have seen the Rotterdam picture looks plausibly Seventeenth Century, whereas the picture Van Meegeren painted in prison to prove his powers looks grotesquely modern.)

In his conclusion Dr. Kurz points out that most fakes have only very slight artistic pretensions, and are collected for their supposed rarity. The rare, artistic forgery, on the other hand, may have a temporary success. "It is a sign of the power of a great work of art that it can be plundered, plagiarised, copied and imitated, and that all the derivatives will to some degree live through the virtue of the original." The truth of this will be apparent to anyone who considers the compelling power that Greek sculpture possessed for centuries during which it was hardly known except through Roman copies, most of them coarse and calumnious.

Raymond Mortimer

A PEOPLE'S CULTURE

Education. The New Horizon. By Harold C. Shearman. *Nicholson and Watson.* 6s.

War usually provokes an overhaul of educational systems. Unfortunately the reforms which flow from these periodic overhauls do not appear to diminish the prospect of wars in the future, though, to be sure, they guarantee fitter and more intelligent combatants next time. It is said that "wars are born in the minds of men." Maybe; but wherever they are born wars are conceived in the heart of man which, we are told, is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Education which does not address itself to the heart as well as to the mind is sterile. The late Professor A. N. Whitehead said "Culture is activity of thought, and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling." It is time we revived that somewhat bedraggled trilogy: truth, beauty and goodness.

I am prompted to these reflections by reading a new and attractive book on education by Harold Shearman. His plan is to record something of the dismal past and to reveal the possibilities of the Education Act of 1944. The swinging text is illustrated by delightful pictures—though those of the past are more grim than delightful—and by attractive pictorial charts in colour, designed by the Isotype Institute. Paul Rotha is the photographic editor. Mr. Shearman warns his readers that "the educational system is in process of reconstruction, but much of it is having to wait till the workers and materials are available" and that "until the full effect is given to the raising of the school-leaving-age to sixteen (which sounds almost as though the age had already been so raised) the great schemes of education for all according to age and ability will still be merely a blueprint." This is a very necessary caution to foreigners who are avid to read about our educational reforms and are deeply disappointed when they come and fail to find them.

Mr. Shearman realises that all is not well with the content of education, and I wish he had dealt more drastically with educational practice as distinct from emphasising changes of structure. Professor Whitehead follows his definition of culture, quoted above, with the devastating pronouncement: "Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth." Our educational system does indeed produce its fair share of bores: they are to be found among Members of Parliament, in the professions, the civil service and, alas, also among teachers, not excluding university professors. But the most tragic commentary on our education is that it produces not only bores but a whole multitude of the bored—people who do not know how to be alone without being lonely, nor how to live in the company of their fellows without making discordant noises. They may have been provided with more than scraps of information, but there has been little nurture of their sense of beauty, and school has somehow failed to help them to lay hold on life as something to be lived simply and with joy. In short, our educational efforts have not succeeded in creating a people's culture, save possibly in the sphere of games, and, in a measure, though the schools cannot claim much responsibility for it, in dancing and gardening. Again Professor Whitehead is apt:

> It would . . . require no very great effort to use our schools to produce a population with some love of music, some enjoyment of drama, and some joy in beauty of form and colour. We could also provide means for the satisfaction of these emotion in the general life of the population. If you thin of the simplest ways, you will see that the strain on material resources would be negligible; and when you have done that, and when your population widely appreciates what art can give—its joy and its terrors—do you not think that your prophets and your clergy and your statesmen will be in a stronger position when they speak to the populatio of the love of God, of the inexorableness of dut and of the call of patriotism ?

There are those who say that it is difficul to find time for these things in the school curri culum: they are and must be regarded as frills. This is a misreading of the situation: what i required is a new conception of the disposal the school day and of the opportunities whic should be offered to boys and girls at a period their lives when they are responsive to truth beauty and goodness. Schools should habituat the young to the disciplined study and practic of the things they enjoy. If they did so, suc unproductive places as pin-table saloons an greyhound racing tracks would find themselve scratching for a living instead of, as now, makin money hand over fist. Mr. Shearman is aliv to this, but in my view he is too pre-occupie with privilege in education and devotes too muc thought to social ideology and too little educational ideas. I do not know, by experienc either the "Public Schools" or the ancien universities; and if I wrote, of the direct gra schools, "To keep company with Eton, to b known at Oxford; these seem to be the education ideals they set themselves," I should suspec myself of envy. It may be, of course, that onl the trumpets of envy will cause the walls privilege to crumble. That is a nice point f psychologists and social historians.

In the administrative sphere, Mr. Shearma is surely a little naive when he writes about th possibility of the "new control and direction clause of the Education Act being used by th Minister "to prevent Local Education Authoriti from spending their own money at their di cretion." Elsewhere he explains that the "fina cial burden of the educational system is . . divided between the central and local governme bodies concerned: that is to say, between th taxpayer, represented by the Exchequer, and th ratepayer, through the County and Coun

Borough Councils ;" and he seeks to justify a claim for a still larger proportion of expenditure to be borne by the central authority. "Spending their own money at their discretion" is thus misleading. There are other minor flaws of interpretation. For instance, it is not fair to the Joseph Chamberlain of 1870 to say ". . .but the idea of education as a liberating force was not realised save by the few. To the Radicals, from Lord Brougham to Joseph Chamberlain, it was knowledge of the new technical processes which was in question." Again, on page 67, Mr. Shearman leaves on the reader's mind the impression that the managers of a voluntary school, in order that their school may be recognised as an "aided school," must bear the whole cost of its reconstruction, whereas in fact they have to find only half the money, the central authority providing the other half.

It would, however, be petty to continue to criticise where so much is so good. I warmly commend the volume to ordinary men and women who wish to learn something of the history of education in this country and to understand the possibilities of the new Education Act. If they are willing to be encouraged to care about the cultural welfare of the young and of those older persons whose capacity for growth has not been irrevocably stifled by bad schooling, they will find the book a treasure.

S. H. Wood

THE LIVING VOICE

The Voyage of Magellan. A Dramatic Chronicle for Radio by Laurie Lee. With drawings by Edward Burra. *Lehmann.* 10s. *6d.*

Minos of Crete, Plays and stories, with selections from a Notebook, Letters, and some unpublished early poems. By Sidney Keyes. Edited by Michael Meyer. *Routledge.* 10s. *6d.*

Poetry has discovered in the radio a new medium or confederate: to the inner voice is added an outward one. Important change, perhaps. Then why don't I, why doesn't every poetry-lover, listen more? Well, in the first place few poems to-day are written to be heard and enjoyed off the reel; and in the second, particular voices may provide a shock—not necessarily a wholesome shock—to habit. We may prefer our own voiceless readings, which can dawdle interminably here and race there, to the spirited intonations from Portland Place. Also there is the natural if regrettable contempt for performances that are, as it were, on tap. Like most people I look forward eagerly in my *Radio Times* and exclaim "Ah, there's something I must listen to," only to remember the occasion afterwards as one among the many I have missed.

I missed Mr. Laurie Lee's *The Voyage of Magellan*; worse, I heard just enough, tuning in late one night, to gather a powerful but confused impression of wind apparatus, bells, guitars, hostile seas, and Mr. Valk roaring his head off. Nor was Magellan the only studio navigator. Columbus had been before and Moby Dick would come after. There was a Marco Polo wandering about too. This fondness for the high seas comes perhaps from the producer's bridge, which looks out on floorboards with a microphone, half a dozen chairs, and a piano in the corner. Noisy navigation, as such, did not appeal to me; but I can see now, with Mr. Lee's full text before me, how wrong I was, at any rate in his case. To read—and even more, I imagine, to hear—this is one of the best pieces of narrative drama the wireless has given us. Its effect is gained by working with poetic intensity on the basis of fact. In August, 1510, with a fleet of five vessels, Magellan sailed for South America; he quelled mutinies, discovered giants, prised his way at last through the land-barrier to the Pacific; was then himself killed by natives; his five ships dwindled to one; storms and sickness reduced the survivors to eighteen, who reached Seville three years after they had set out. This is the moment chosen by the poet for firing off retrospectively his flashes of adventure. A dusty Seville street holds the oceans; while the funeral procession goes by, a sailor (one of the eighteen) stops to speak to a blind beggar, and his story splits off into scenes and returns to the street with its drums and its barefoot mourners. The impress of present and past is vivid indeed. I had thought (from my casual tuning in, eighteen months ago) that the device of narrative enclosing narrative, scene within scene, overburdened the attention; but in fact, thanks to the strength of the language, it does not. Here is poetic speech that catches and holds us instantaneously (no need, here, for the unravelling inner voice), that can quicken a scene or sketch an attitude in a sentence. What other living poet employs his five senses as adventurously as Mr. Lee? How he relishes, and makes the reader or listener relish, the spices, winds, debaucheries, mutinies, hallucinations, thirsts, and eye-amazing spectacles of this voyage! "Sharp hot wind!" exclaims [illegible] sail:

> Ah! sharp hot wind, storm-hatching [illegible]
> green whales of ocean with your rocks of [illegible]
> I welcome your enmity.
> To meet your rage, your rigours of distance,
> I have fought kings and all their creeping clowns.
> Their worm-toothed jealousies have nibbled into
>   my decks,
> my stores, the loyalty of my men.
> I bear them with me yet. . . .

His five ships are the "horned fingers" with which he clutches at discovery. And Magellan himself is slashed into our vision no less vigorously:

> Oh, the black runt of a Portuguese!
> The hobbling hulk of a crab-backed sailor—
> Why had Spain no men like him?
> We did not love Magellan,
> he was sharp as pepper, hard as a turtle,
> crafty, bloody, cold as pitch.
> His eyes were like cannons, not the eyes of a man.
> Yet he was a man.
> He crammed us like unripe stores into his ships,
> he drove us through seas no keel has cut before;
> he sailed us like a fiend, out of our knowledge;
> and when we thought we'd reached the end of the
>   world,
> he looked over the horizon and saw that it was the
>   beginning.

That, remarkably, is the level sustained throughout the fifty-odd pages of Mr. Lee's "chronicle play." He has rammed home his facts beautifully; and here and there he enlarges on a moment—the starving men dreaming of home, for example, or Magellan's Christian appeal to the islanders—yet never to the extent of drifting away into detached poems. Only two faults occur to me after reading and listening in my head for the effects: neither of much importance. Several scenes are made to blossom out of the sailor's story at which he cannot have been present, and at one point he is made to intrude unexpectedly, and it sounds too much like the voice of Mr. Lee himself. But as I say these criticisms don't weigh heavily, and I should like to check them when this chronicle gets its next performance.

Minos of Crete, a play written by Sidney Keyes while he was still at school, lacks just that quality which makes *The Voyage of Magellan* so remarkable: the living voice. "He wrote a hard and brilliant prose," Mr. Meyer comments, "he himself used to complain that he was unable successfully to imitate the rhythms of human speech in the manner of Synge and Joyce." Similarly his letters were not usually self-revealing: a few extracts are printed here. The

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most interesting pieces seem to me the last of the three poems, the notebook, and the stories, of which the first, "The Albatross," is an astonishing performance for a boy of sixteen. Keyes was one of those writers in whom the hard and the soft tend to be curiously distributed. Nothing can take away from the brilliance of his best poems, and here at least is a collection that will add to our evidence of Keyes if not to his reputation.

G. W. STONIER

NEW NOVELS

All The King's Men. By ROBERT PENN WARREN. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 12s. 6d.
Answer to Question 33. By CHRISTOPHER SYKES. *Collins.* 8s. 6d.
The Mountain of the Upas Tree. By RICHARD MARCH. *Poetry London.* 7s. 6d.
Three Ways to Mecca. By EDWIN CORLE. *Cape.* 9s. 6d.

Mr. Robert Penn Warren, who is also a scholar and a poet, is probably the most distinguished of the younger American novelists. He comes from the Deep South and has been plainly influenced in his prose by William Faulkner, but he is a much more objective writer and his work is firmly based, as Faulkner's is not, on a bedrock of ideas. *All the King's Men* is his most ambitious novel and a very impressive work, not merely because there are a quarter of a million words in it. From one point of view, it is a study in the art of government. At the centre of the novel stands the figure of Willy Stark, a demagogue of poor-white origin who becomes governor and virtual dictator of a state on the Mississipi delta. The personality and career of Stark are obviously closely modelled on those of the late Huey Long, who was assassinated by a political enemy in the Louisiana state senate house in 1935. Long was a picturesquely disconcerting figure even in American politics, and it was customary during his lifetime to call him a Fascist. But Stark, as portrayed by Jack Burden, Mr. Warren's narrator, is for all his faults nearly a great man; he may be a boozer and a fornicator, governing by a mixture of mob oratory, graft and blackmail; but he never deceives himself, he himself is not corrupted, his ends remain good, and he can inspire loyalty in the most diverse of his followers. If his fight for the poor is sometimes of doubtful legality, he has his answer:

> . . . I'm not a lawyer. I know some law. In fact, I know a lot of law. And I made me some money out of law. But I'm not a lawyer. That's why I can see what the law is like. It's like a single-bed blanket on a double-bed and three folks in the bed and a cold night. There ain't ever enough blankets to cover the case, no matter how much pulling and hauling, and somebody is always going to nigh catch pneumonia. Hell, the law is like the pants you bought last year for a growing boy, but it is always this year and the seams are popped and the shankbones to the breeze. The law is always too short and too tight for growing humankind. The best you can do is do something and then make up some law to fit and by the time that law gets on the books you would have done something different . . .

Mr. Warren's argument, if I understand it, is that politics can function only in the realm of the possible; if graft is part of the machinery of government then graft must be used; or, as Stark himself says: "You got to use what you've got. You got to use fellows like Byram, and Tiny Duffy, and that scum down in the Legislature. You can't make bricks without straw, and most of the time all the straw you got is secondhand straw, from the cowpen." The result is a masterly rendering of life and government in a backward American state in which heat, dirt, squalor, illiteracy and the remains of a traditionally gracious way of life for the wealthy exist side by side. It is, as it were, the world of the decayed houses of Faulkner, of the moronic poor whites of Caldwell, set in their social and economic context.

But Mr. Warren is not content merely to tell the story of the rise and fall of Willy Stark; through his narrator, Jack Burden, he sets it in perspective. Burden will probably be something of a problem for the English reader. Stark's confidential secretary, he is a newspaperman talking with the tough cynicism that we expect of newspapermen in American fiction. So it comes as a shock to realise that Burden is much more than this, that he has been trained as an historian and a scholar and that almost by second nature he translates events during Stark's govenorship into their historical analogies. And, as the book develops, Burden grows in importance, so that by the end it is his story rather than Stark's that Mr. Warren seems to be telling. Yet one is aware of no feeling of strain in Mr. Warren's handling of his parallel stories; they are indeed organically related; for the fall of Stark and his long consideration of the significance of the career of his former chief lead to Burden's redemption from what he calls the dream of the "great twitch," the principles of which are: "First, that you cannot lose what you have never had. Second, that you are never guilty of a crime which you did not commit." It is not until the end of the book that we realise that Burden's redemption, his discovery that "history is blind, but man is not," has been the outcome of events going far back into the past, that Mr. Warren has most cunningly been unwinding a plot of truly Ibsenite complexity. The occasional sentimentalities, the over-simplification of human relations into which Mr. Warren slips, are of the kind that seem inseparable from even the best contemporary American fiction. They do not prevent the book from being a very formidable attempt at a novel on the grand scale.

Though not, I think, successful as a novel, *Answer to Question* 33 is a most agreeable and civilised piece of writing. Mr. Sykes has two stories to tell, that of the English Lady Caroline, whom the narrator has loved all his life and who becomes a wanton, and that of the anglophile anti-Fascist Donna Isabella, who is so disillusioned by her treatment by the British in Cairo in 1941 that she ends by broadcasting anti-British propaganda from Moscow. But the two stories remain obstinately two, so that as a novel *Answer to Question* 33 is broken-backed. For all that, it is a work of distinction; the account of the hero's childhood in Yorkshire, under the lee of a great family, is delightful: as a picture of life in the stateliest homes of England it seems to me much more convincing than Mr. Waugh's in *Brideshead Revisited*. And throughout the novel one has the sense of being in the company of a man at ease with life, an amateur of more than one art, who has seen many countries and enjoyed rich experiences. It is not the commonest feeling one has when reading contemporary fiction.

The Mountain of the Upas Tree is unquestionably fiction but I am not at all sure it is a novel. "The journey to the Upas Tree," I quote the blurb, "is . . . a search for the modern individual personality." Again: "The Upas Tree . . . is a symbol of our society which is police-ridden, magic-ridden, and knowledge-ridden, and in which we are left prostrate before the enormity of our desires." To which I can only add: "It must be, if you say so," for even with these pointers to guide me I was quite unable to unravel Mr. March's allegory. I regret this because I much admired his stories *The Darkening Meridian*. Mr. March is a very gifted writer, he evokes sensations of horror and heat with great vividness, and though I did not understand he kept me reading to the end for his incidental beauties of imagery and language. The opening scenes in a North

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African port and the quest for the Upas Tree tself are particularly well done, lit up in an allucinatory clarity. But I wish I knew the ignificance of Mr. Benazon's blue skin.

The first sentence of *Three Ways to Mecca* romised liveliness: "Dwight, who was ten, said o Patricia, who was eight, 'This time *I'll* be the sychiatrist and *you'll* be Daddy'." But Mr. Corle never makes up his mind whether he is riting satire, a novel of ideas, or just another tory of Americans in Paris. His forte, I imagine, s satire; he is pleasantly funny about psycho-nalysts, Californian gurus and the film industry, ut in this novel he has done little more than ad out an amusing anecdote—a Hollywood ovelist dresses up as a dog simply because he ikes dressing up as a dog—to an alarming length. There is a character called Randy Bayliss. Since e is described as "a tall, agreeable-looking chap n a brown tweed suit and brown oxfords," I can nly conclude that American language has diverged rom the English to an even greater extent than ne had imagined.

WALTER ALLEN

PROPHETS OF YESTERDAY.

reamers of Dreams. BY HOLBROOK JACKSON. *Faber.* 16s.

Mr. Holbrook Jackson's volume of Victorian ges made, in one sense, a strong impression on e; but it was, particularly for a reviewer, of a istressing kind. To be frank, I have never read rough any book, on a general and unalarming bject, with such frustration, so continuous a ilure to make out what it was driving at.

The difficulty was itself a puzzle; for what, recisely, is there to baffle one?

> The six nineteenth-century writers examined in the following pages [says Mr. Jackson], were related to one another by sympathies and ideas. They all came under the influence of their times and in addition they influenced one another both directly or indirectly (*sic*). Carlyle influenced Emerson and Ruskin; Emerson influenced Thoreau and Whitman; and Ruskin influenced William Morris.

othing, therefore, could be more natural than make a book of them. The studies, being a tchwork of quotation, can't go far wrong; re is, moreover, a sustained appearance of ecutive argument. But what the argument s, from one moment to the next I felt pletely uncertain.

One or two general though still uncertain ideas erge. In the first place, that there is some-g bogus about reform.

> It should soon be obvious . . . that the six dreamers of dreams have been as much concerned with their own as with the world's salvation. . . . The reforms or revolutions advocated are designed to promise better conditions for themselves, and acceptability by their fellow men is a secondary consideration. But as they are not only dreamers but men of moral ambition with highly developed social consciences, they feel it necessary to justify their self-willed demands, and they do so by using the familiar argument that what they advocate is good for others. All world-savers have done the same with varying degrees of frankness.

It would therefore seem impossible to take much interest in their ideas as such; the object is to see through them. They are to be explained in terms of maladjustment, self-pity and repression of the natural man. And to be maladjusted is apparently a bad sign, irrespective of the state of affairs one is maladjusted to. It is a sign of inferiority to *l'homme moyen sensuel*, whom one might almost take for the ideal character—and if *l'homme moyen* is red in tooth and claw, there will be no harm done. At least so I gathered from the tone in which it is pointed out that Emerson did not really like savagery.

The author's technique of exposure and insistence on a public-school healthy-mindedness goes pretty far. Emerson, for instance, once remarked that "Every man beholds his human condition with a degree of melancholy." One might pass that over as a truism gracefully expressed; but not at all—he is trying to "escape responsibility for his idiosyncrasies and his moods by communalising them." Feeling the attraction of a number of different states is also a flaw in character—and so on.

Now the "maladjusted egoist" thesis can be applied to Carlyle and Ruskin, obviously, with a good deal of success. When you come to William Morris, the case is altered. It is impossible to feel that this exuberantly healthy-minded, natural man would have been even healthier if he had liked "industrial progress," or less egoistic if he had not aimed at a better life for mankind in general. And incidentally, no one had a keener sense of pathos in the "human condition," even at its soundest and happiest.

But it is unfair to keep insisting on the thesis, just because it offers a clue in the prevailing fog of particulars. The author does not himself maintain it with unbending firmness. To William Morris it is scarcely applied at all: "Morris fails because he is right. He has the courage to make no compromise with the social system he condemns." As for Ruskin, "his social doctrines, stripped of their rhetoric and pruned of their egotism, are . . . more useful to the present age than any other teaching that has survived the century he helped to make illustrious." And so on; we have come full circle, and the maladjusted have their due after all. They were wisdom crying in the streets, which no man regarded—or which at most, inevitably, drew a small audience, powerless to deflect the march of events.

The fact is, we are not so well-adjusted ourselves that we can afford to look down on Victorian gospellers—even on Carlyle, who is by far the most vulnerable. The real attraction of this book is as a reminder, a kind of lucky-bag. All kinds of multi-coloured scraps come to light, and prompt another look at the complete article.

K. JOHN

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The Hakluyt Society, in their Volume for 1947, have begun the translation of a manuscript which came, by chance, to the library of the East India Company early in the last century. It is the Abbé Carré's account of his travels in 1672-1674, from France to the Levant, in the Middle East and India. For the historian he should prove an interesting witness, connected with the schemes of Louis XIV and Colbert for extending French influence in India. They sent him there by the quickest possible route—and how slow it was, what trouble and danger every mile, he describes himself—to investigate the tangled affairs of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales and transmit urgent instructions to the French Fleet then active in Indian waters. A less professional reader, however, will prefer the general impression left by some of the detail recorded here, of a traveller finding his

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path through the ruin of so many crumbled sovereignties strewn over the East at this period, with apparently nothing yet ready to take their place. Above all, there is the Abbé's forthright picture of a European power crumbling away in India: the Portuguese.

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Week-end Competitions

No. 955

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Six guineas are offered for twelve lines of conversation in rhyme conducted by the three figures by Henry Moore in Battersea Park in stichomythia (each character taking one line in rotation). Entries by June 15th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 952

Set by F. C. C.

The other evening on the Brains Trust, Bertrand Russell declined this irregular verb:

I am firm,
You are obstinate,
He is a pig-headed fool.

The usual prizes are offered for three other examples of this type of irregular verb.

Report by F. C. C.

An unprecedented number of entries, some two thousand verbs in all, many of them brilliant. The danger, after hours of judging, was to overrate the original, however irregular, such as the reversed verb: He is a fascist. You are anti-semitic. Some of my best friends are Jews. [H. P. Levin] at the expense of the more orthodox, such as: I am traditional. You are old-fashioned. He is reactionary. [Diabolotin] The most popular led from *sensitive* to *neurotic*, *frank* to *rude*, *economical* to *skin-flint*, *broad-minded* to *a tart* and *entertaining* to *drunk*. There were many brilliant single entries, but few had three good ones together. Some of the more irregular verbs deserve high commendation: I am religious. You go to church. He plays tennis with the vicar. [Woo] I am delicate. You refuse to take reasonable care and so give us all this trouble. He is swinging the lead. [M. J. Ram] I won't work with Poles. You display racial prejudice. He is a bloody fascist. [E. W. Padgett] I am well-informed. You listen to gossip. He believes everything in the papers. [H. Murray] I have about me something of the subtle, haunting, mysterious perfumes of the Orient. You rather overdo it, dear. She stinks. [W. A. S. Powell] I am sunburnt. You are sallow. She must have a touch of the tar-brush. [K. P.] and Lucifer's plural: We are the backbone of England. You think so because you read the *Daily Express*. They make one wonder if democracy is a good thing after all. And from a host of good "conventional" verbs: I am an artist. You are artistic. He is arty. [Stanley J. Sharpless] I am sparkling. You are unusually talkative. He is drunk. [R. E. Kitching] I have reconsidered it. You have changed your mind. He has gone back on his word. [H. M. Hood] I am an epicure. You are a gourmand. He has both feet in the trough. [Radimor] I travel. You tour. He trips. [H. V. S. Page] I am a creative writer. You have a journalistic flair. He is a prosperous hack. [J. R. Till] I have the new look. You have let down your hem. She has had that dress since 1934.

I recommend a First Prize of two guineas to L. E. J., a guinea each to V. Johnson and Surgeon-Lieutenant D. A. MacLeod, and half a guinea to C. Strachey, L. G. Udall, Michael Hinton and M. M. Levetus.

I

I am Oxford.
You are Cambridge.
He is London School of Economics.

II

I breakfast in bed.
You are a bit of a molly-coddle.
He is a hopeless valetudinarian.

III

I once met Sacheverell.
You were a Grenadier with Osbert.
He lunches once a week with Edith.

L. E. J.

I day-dream.
You are an escapist.
He ought to go to that charming Viennese in
Welbeck Street.

I believe.
You are deluded.
He is damned.

I win.
You played a jolly fine game, Sir.
Thank God he sprained his ankle.

V. JOHNSON

I believe in "mens sana in corpore sano."
You are a keen physical culturist.
He is all brawn and no brains.

I am righteously indignant.
You are annoyed.
He is making a fuss about nothing.

I made some telling points.
You wandered a little at times.
He never understood the matter at issue.

Surgeon-Lieutenant D. A. MACLEOD

I am frank.
You are blatant.
He is a Buchmanite.

I like boys.
You are a scoutmaster.
He is in prison.

I know what I like.
You have no taste.
He is a Philistine.

C. STRACHEY

I am unfortunate.
You are careless.
He is asking for it.

I am witty.
You are funny.
He is damned ridiculous.

I love her.
You seem fond of her.
He is leading her astray.

L. G. UDALL

I have a few rarish things.
You are a gold-mine for dealers.
He fills his house with junk.

I am fastidious.
You are fussy.
He is an old woman.

I try to see their point of view.
You are muddle-headed.
He is a crypto-Communist.

MICHAEL HINTON

I am beautiful.
You have quite good features.
She isn't bad-looking, if you like that type

I am intelligent.
You are a bit of a highbrow.
She has a job at the B.B.C.

I am suffering from neuralgia.
You have a hangover.
She's in a shocking bad temper.

M. M. LEVETUS

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Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns re- ates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless e or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1947, or the acancy is for employment excepted from the rovision of that Order.

REGISTRAR, Univ. Institution, Malaya. Applics. invited for the post of Registrar n the university institution which is being es- blished in Malaya on the basis of the existing ing Edward VII College of Medicine and affles College. Registrar will be directly re- ponsible to the Principal for the general ad- inistration of the institution and will be Secre- ary of the Council and of the Senate. A Bursar qual in status with the Registrar will be re- ponsible to the Principal for financial adminis- ation. Sal. up to £1,600 p.a., plus cost of liv- g allowance (at present £154 p.a. for single d £224 p.a. for married persons). Free pas- ges. Superannuation. Children's allowances. revision of sal. scale is under consideration y the Malayan Governments at present, but e terms offered will not be less favourable an the above. Candidates must be grads. ref. given to those with exp. of university ad- inistration or teaching. Candidates should bmit applics. (6 copies), giving full partics. qualifics. and exp. and names of 3 persons whom ref. may be made, to Secy., Inter- niversity Council for Higher Education in e Colonies, 8 Park St. W.1, by July 1.

UNIVERSITY of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Applics. invited for ppointment to the post of Professor of Music d History of Music. Sal. is on scale £1,100 × 50 to £1,400 p.a., together with a temporary st of living allowance which at present is £75 a. in the case of married man or man with ependents and £46 16s. p.a. in the case of hers. Membership of the University Teachers' ovident Fund is compulsory and involves a ntribution of 6% (which may shortly be ised) on the pensionable salary which is 1,000×£50 to £1,300 p.a. Further partics. d information as to method of applic. from ecretary, Universities Bureau of the British mpire, 8 Park St. W.1. Closing date for the ceipt of applications is July 31.

OCCUPATIONAL Psychology Research Officer. Scientific & Industrial Research ept., Wellington, New Zealand. Applications e invited from university graduates possessing ualifics. and exp. suitable for engaging in cupational psychology research in New Zea- nd, and for continuing the research aspects work already inaugurated. Appointees will reqd. to develop a small research unit which ll function in collaboration with the Per- nnel Advisory Division of the Department of bour and Employment. Salary: £610 p.a. to 25 p.a. (N.Z.) according to qualifics. and p., payable from date of commencement of ties in N.Z. Steamer fares up to £100 (N.Z.) h for appointee and his wife and fares for y dependent children will be allowed. Inci- ntal expenses in travelling to take up ap- ntment will also be granted and if necessary allowance will be paid for a short period cover any excessive accomm. costs in N.Z. nding permanent arrangements. An amount exceeding £50 (N.Z.) will be paid to cover t of bringing light personal effects to N.Z. pointee will be reqd. to give an undertaking remain in service of the Government for at st three years, in default of which any fares expenses paid in taking up duty will be re- ndable. Every permanent officer may, if he desires, contribute to Public Service Super- n. Fund. Successful applicant will be reqd. to mit himself for medical exam. before final lection. Applics. close with the Official Secy., gh Commissioner for New Zealand, 415 rand, London, W.C.2, on June 15, 1948.

UNIVERSITY College of North Wales. Ap- plics. invited for following Assistant Lec- rships: 1. French (two vacancies). 2. emistry. 3. Philosophy (two vacancies). 4. ucation. 5. Biblical History and Literature. Classics (with special qualifics. in Ancient tory). 7. German. 8. Mathematics. Sal. 50 p.a. plus superannuation and family wances if applicable. Appointments will from Oct. 1, 1948, and will be for 3 yrs. first inst. Applics. should reach Glyn berts, Secretary and Registrar, from whom ther partics. must be obtained, by June 12 ne 19 for Mathematics).

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NATIONAL Union of Students has vacancy for General Sec. Man/woman. Young d. essential. Sal. £400-£600 according to lifics. and exp. Applics. in writing with 2 imonials should reach N.U.S., 3 Endsleigh W.C.1, by June 16.

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CATERING Assistant reqd. by the Kensington Community Restaurants. It is essential that the applicant should have recent exp. in large-scale catering, and some knowl. of simple book-keeping. Sal. £5 10s. p.w. with meals, uniform, and laundry provided. Applics. in own handwriting to: Miss M. E. Mileham, Kensington Communal Services Cttee., 197 Kensington High St. W.8.

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PETERBOROUGH, Westwood House School. Wanted, September, graduate Assistant Mistress and young graduate Assistant Master to divide teaching English, Geography, History, up to school cert. with Senior girls, the Master also to take charge of boys in Preparatory. Recog. Burnham. Govt. superann.

REQD. in Sept. in Recognised Girls' Boarding School, Grad. Mistress to teach Science, and/or Maths. Resident post. Burnham scale with usual deductions. Principal, West Heath, Sevenoaks, Kent.

HILLCROFT Residential College for Working Women requires resident Secretary: good general office exp., including accounts and interest in educational and social work essential; univ. degree or diploma a welcome but not necessary qualific. Salary £350-£450 p.a. (£100 deducted for residence). Apply now to Secy., Hillcroft College, Surbiton, Surrey.

TYPIST, full or part-time, shorthand an advantage. Applics. in writing, stating salary reqd., to Admin. Secretary, P.E.P., 16 Queen Anne's Gate, S.W.1.

WANTED, Resident Book-keeper Secretary (woman) for University Settlement, Nile St. Liverpool. Salary £120-£150 according to qualifications, together with board. Apply Hon. Warden.

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FARM Manager, Scotsman (desires change). Married, 32. Knowledge of organic farming. Partics. exchanged interview. Address 1838. Wm. Porteous & Co., Glasgow.

LAWYER & Economist, 40, Brit. of German origin, ex. Foreign Office (educ. work with P.O.W.s), exp. intern. affairs, export and import, wants position with constructive possibilities. Box 2949.

YOUNG lady with knowledge of English, German, French and Hebrew, would consider position in bookshop or publishing business where knowledge of languages is of advantage. Write Box 176, c/o George Murray (Advtg.), Ltd., 184, Strand, London, W.C.2.

CRAFTS and Art Mistress free Sept. for part-time work in London. Qualified, experienced. Box 3256.

KINDERGARTEN Teacher, expd., reqs. post Sept., in Prog. Boys School. Country, South of London pref. Box 3175.

Appointments Wanted—continued

ENERGETIC young man (28), currently directing U.S. Gvt. project in Germany, adm., editl. and research exp., travelled, languages, wishes to represent publg. house or other agency here or in Germany. Box 2990.

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